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A PARADIGM OF CONVERSION IN LUKE

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ABSTRACT

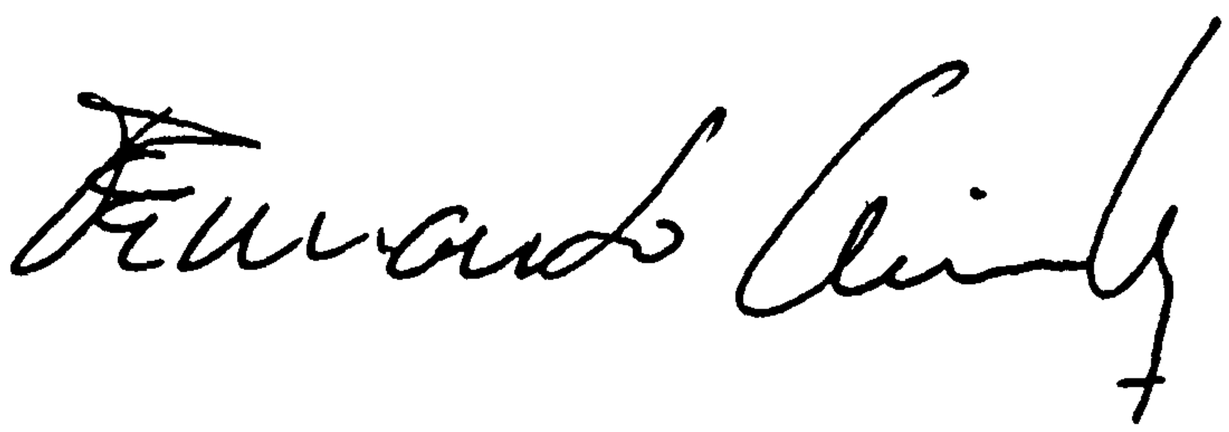
Conversion is a main theme in Luke's theology. However, it is Paul's experience, as found in Acts, that has become normative and overshadowed other conversion experience accounts, including those in the third gospel. The aim of the present work is to show how Luke conveys his theological emphasis on conversion through what will be called *a paradigm of conversion* in his gospel. In order to accomplish the task, the main tool will be *Redaktionsgeschichte* with attention paid to the social relevance of the issues dealt with in the different accounts.

The material on conversion in Luke is either unique to his gospel (7:36-50; 15:11-32; 19:1-10; 23:39-43) or material that he has edited (3:1-17; 5:27-32) to emphasize conversion. Through a detailed exegesis of these texts, attention is paid to the different issues involved in Luke's emphasis on conversion and an attempt is made to place them within the larger spectrum of his theology. It is the grouping of all these elements that provides the basis for constructing Luke's *paradigm of conversion*. To illuminate this paradigm further, a final chapter concentrates on the contrast with what has been called here "a non-conversion story" (18:18-30).

In the Introduction there is a linguistic analysis of conversion-related terms together with a review of works on conversion in the third gospel. Following that, two chapters on conversion in Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophy respectively provide a contemporary literary and historical background to the study of the topic in Luke. In the Conclusion, the different elements from the analysis of the various accounts are systematically arranged to justify the claim for *a paradigm of conversion* in the Gospel of Luke.

Declaration:

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or another University.

Signed: 

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Soli Deo Gloria

INTRODUCTION

1 THE SUBJECT

Mere novelty is not of itself a mark of merit, and novelty for its own sake should certainly not be encouraged in an interpreter or expositor of any text.[1]

The extent of the bibliography on Christian conversion is vast.[2] This is also the case with the study of conversion in the Lukan corpus in which special consideration has been given to the story of Paul's conversion,[3] mainly drawing on the three different occasions it is recounted in the book of Acts (9; 22; 26), and in a lesser degree to the stories of the conversions of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Cornelius (Acts 10) and of the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16:11-40). The approaches are diverse, without even mentioning the extensive range of non-academic or devotional types of literature devoted to the study of conversion or so-called "born-again" experiences and theological emphases.

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[1] Dunn, Jesus, Paul and the Law (1990) 183.

[2] Back in 1982 Rambo published a rather comprehensive bibliography on conversion divided according to disciplines, with an introductory observation on each section ("Current Research," [1982] 146-59). The arranging criteria were anthropological, sociological, historical, psychological, psychoanalytical, and theological ones. In his book Understanding Religious Conversion (1993) Rambo studies conversion drawing on insights from these diverse disciplines.

[3] In the words of Rambo, "the literature on the conversion of Paul is a study in frustration" ("Current Research," [1982] 157). See, Dunn, "Paul's Conversion," (1997); Longenecker, Road from Damascus (1997); Marguerat, "Saul's Conversion," (1995) 127-55; Hurtado, "'Conversion' of Paul in Recent Scholarship" (1993) 273-84; Segal, Paul the Convert (1990); Lohfink, Conversion of St. Paul (1976); Stendahl, Paul among Jews and Gentiles (1976), to mention just a few examples. Sections on the conversion of Paul can be found in titles either dealing with conversion in general or with the life and theology of Paul.

The fact that so much has been written on conversion invites any new attempt on the field to approach the theme in the awareness of the restricted possibilities and the enormous limitations. Nonetheless, the aim of the present work is to establish a consistent, although not exhaustive, account of conversion in the third gospel, bringing together a range of elements congenial to Lukan theology that will show a coherent theological pattern of conversion particular to Luke.

The prominence that the stories on the conversion of Paul have received has overshadowed other similar accounts to the point that Paul's experience has become normative for all conversions, and expressions like "Damascus road experience" have become tantamount to any conversion-like experience, not only in the religious sense. However the presentation of conversion in Acts presupposes a post-resurrection context so that a different presentation to that in the third gospel can be presupposed. Thus, there is the need to consider how Luke portrays conversion in connection to the earthly ministry of Jesus. The present contention is that so far, few have covered all of the theological emphases involved in conversion and no one has offered a paradigmatic analysis of conversion in the third gospel dealing both with the theological and with the social connotations involved in the Lukan description.

The following sections will help to set the ground for the present study. Firstly, attention will be paid to relevant works dealing with conversion in Luke,

looking both at their contributions and at the limitations that may call for another contribution on the subject. Secondly, a linguistic study of conversion-related terms will show the use and prominence of the theme in Luke.[4] Thirdly, the methodology used to construct the argument of the investigation will be presented. Fourthly, the general arrangement of the different chapters of the whole work will be displayed.

2 RECENT RESEARCH

Two relevant works have been influential throughout the twentieth century. At the very beginning of that period, William James' The Variety of Religious Experience became a landmark study of religious life in general. Concerning conversion, he argued that

> to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.[5]

James departed from dogmatic approaches to examine the psychological rendering of religion, including conversion experiences.

Three decades later, Arthur Darby Nock, in another epoch making work Conversion, defined conversion as

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[4] A chart is included in page 27 to show statistical analysis of the occurrences of these terms.

[5] James, Variety of Religious Experience (1902) 160.

> the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.[6]

In his book, he disclosed the diversity of conversion during the Roman Empire, aware of the contrast that the different period analysed brings into the understanding of conversion, namely, the contrast between studying it as a twentieth century phenomenon and as one of antiquity. For him, in contemporary Western society there is a "background of concepts" derived from Christian tradition that are present in people's consciousness, concepts that were not existing at the time to which his study alluded.[7] In many ways these two works have set the pace for subsequent study even for those who opposed them.[8]

Conversion in Luke has been a generally neglected subject, as the present review will show. It is significant that even works intending to deal with conversion in the New Testament fail to acknowledge the relevance of the issue in the third gospel. Two recent titles can help to illustrate this claim. In the first one, From Darkness to Light. Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament (1986), Beverly Gaventa deals with the difficulties the term "conversion" conveys. Although it may be taken for granted that there is a common understanding of conversion, she provides a useful survey from the social

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[6] Nock, Conversion (1933) 7.

[7] Nock, Conversion (1933) 8.

[8] For an example of a more recent approach, see, MacMullen Christianizing (1984), esp. 2-9 for his critique of Nock.

sciences showing the different understandings and social readings the term conveys. She then approaches the topic from what she calls "*three categories of personal change*", namely, alternation, conversion and transformation.[9] By alternation, she understands the change that grows from the individual's existing conduct. Conversion is a much more radical change which implies the rejection of previous allegiances for other new ones. Transformation is a change *in-between*, for although a radical change from previous behaviour and identity are implied, there is no rejection of the past but a reinterpretation of it on the basis of the newly acquired perception. Under these three categories, the analysis of what Gaventa calls "the major texts in the New Testament that are related to alternation, conversion and transformation"[10] takes place. In the four chapters of Gaventa's book, the first deals with Paul's conversion, drawing on his own letters (Gal 1:11-17; Phil 3:2-11; Rom 7:13-15), while chapter four deals both with Johannine literature (mainly John 3:1-21) and 1 Peter. The two middle chapters of the book, chapters two and three, are both introduced under the subject heading "Conversion in Luke-Acts". In chapter 2 the three Lukan accounts of Paul's conversion (Acts 9, 22, 26) are analyzed, and in chapter 3 the author studies the conversions of the masses after Peter's speech at Pentecost (Acts 2:38-42), of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) and of Cornelius (Acts 10:1-11:18).

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[9] Gaventa, From Darkness to Light (1986) 12.

[10] Gaventa, From Darkness to Light (1986) 13.

From her study of the Acts material, Gaventa argues that Luke "tells *about* the conversions of groups and of individuals, but he is not interested in conversion stories *per se*. The conversions Luke includes all appear in connection with some larger issues in the community's development".[11] This is quite a blunt sidelining of an issue receiving such a central role in Luke. For instance, Talbert and Finn have recently argued that conversion is a focal point, perhaps *the* focal point, of Acts, based both on the number of conversion accounts registered and other editorial statements.[12] This is not to deny that for Luke conversion is related to other issues affecting the community. No theological issue stands unrelated on its own. Nonetheless, conversion stands on its own ground as a cornerstone in Luke's depicting of God's salvific plan. Conversion fleshes out God's graciousness towards people and how they respond, which becomes fundamental in the subsequent formation and existence of the newly-inclusive Christian community. Furthermore, a significant inadequacy in Gaventa's work is the absence of any study of conversion accounts with reference to the ministry of Jesus as depicted in the synoptics, especially in the gospel of Luke, to see how her threefold approach on alternation, conversion and transformation would work and how it develops from there to, for example, the book of Acts.

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[11] Gaventa, From Darkness to Light (1986) 124.

[12] Talbert, "Conversion in the Acts," (1998) 141; Finn, From Death to Rebirth (1997) 27.

A more recent work than Gaventa's is Richard Peace's Conversion in the New Testament (1999). Peace narrows the scope of the study to Paul and the Twelve as portrayed in Mark, under the prism of what he considers to be "paradigmatic experiences found in the New Testament".[13] Although Peace acknowledges that the Markan paradigm of conversion is different to the one depicting Paul's conversion, nonetheless the main thrust of his work is to systematise those elements describing "the core pattern of Paul's conversion", namely, insight, turning, and transformation, which serve as the guiding criteria for analysing the conversion of the twelve as found in the gospel of Mark.[14] Although he denies it, what Peace is doing in fact is making Paul's conversion a normative one for the Christian experience. Paul's conversion is a prototypical one, unfolded with a different dynamic in Mark.[15] "What happened to Paul and what happened to the Twelve was identical in terms of theological understanding, though quite different experientially".[16] The concluding section of the book presents two paradigms of conversion in the New Testament and applies them to the present evangelistic ministry of the church. The approach is in itself highly questionable for it presupposes a normative role for the stories of Paul's conversion in Acts, paying little attention to what Paul himself says in his

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[13] Peace, Conversion in the New Testament (1999) 8.

[14] Peace, Conversion in the New Testament (1999) 13.

[15] As a means of justifying the view that the Markan experiences can be called conversion, Peace argues that they share "the same three core characteristics found in Paul's conversion" (Conversion in the New Testament [1999] 106).

[16] Peace, Conversion in the New Testament (1999) 10.

writings,[17] and from there he goes into Mark trying to justify a similar theological pattern.

Coming closer to the area of concern of the present study, the analysis of the different scholarly contributions to the subject of conversion in the third gospel will be guided by the attempt to show the extent to which they help to clarify what is at stake in the Lukan understanding of conversion. Furthermore, they will also help to show the insufficient treatment the topic has received so far, and therefore validate the need for the present work as a necessary contribution, along with them, to the topic. The attempt is not to deny what has already been said, but the goal is to build on those contributions that help to shed light on the issue.

The criteria for selecting the different works have been, firstly, that they specifically deal with conversion in the third gospel[18] and, secondly, that each is a significant treatment of the topic. There are works on Luke that include in passing, or too briefly, references to conversion (or repentance, which at times they interchange), to which no independent reference will be made in this section although they may be used elsewhere in the present study as

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[17] In those occasions when Peace brings the Pauline letters into account they are mainly used to validate what he is arguing from Acts.

[18] For example, Marshall has a section on how salvation is appropriated by the individual, emphasising God's initiative, repentance, faith, conversion, baptism, the Spirit, praise and prayer, possessions and tribulations (Historian and Theologian [1988^3] 188-215). Nonetheless, with the exception of the issue of wealth and possessions in which he acknowledges a different perspective in the gospel of Luke from that of the book of Acts, the argument is built on the latter. When references are made to the third gospel they are used to validate a point already elaborated from texts in Acts.

appropriate. The following arrangement of the different works studied is a chronological one.

2.1 Hans Conzelmann[19]

One of the main contributions of Conzelmann's work is his recognition of the theological value of Luke's work through his methodological emphasis on reading the Lukan material with an interest in the particular imprints of Luke's views on the materials he handles.[20] This factor determines the whole of Conzelmann's approach so that the anthropological analysis is rather succinct. The individual is assimilated in the wider concept of the church,[21] which is the third phase in his threefold development of salvation history. Since God is the one who governs the life of the church, God consequently directs the life of the individual as well.[22] However, in dealing with the individual in Luke, Conzelmann stresses, not the Spirit possessed believer, but a more ethical approach,[23] in which the individual turns out to be the object of his own thought and deeds. Thus, μετάνοια and ἐπιστρέφω are presented in such an ethical framework.[24] Likewise, Conzelmann describes ἁμαρτία and ἄφεσις in ethical terms.

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[19] Theology of St. Luke (1960), esp., 99-101, 225-31.

[20] Still today, Conzelmann's Theology of St. Luke is considered "so far the most influential monograph on Luke's theology" (Stenschke, Luke's Portrait of Gentiles [1999] 28).

[21] This is Conzelmann's understanding of the way Luke attempts to avoid some problems such as the delay of the parousia and eschatology (Theology of St. Luke [1960] 225).

[22] Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960) 226.

[23] Fitzmyer also stresses the Lukan ethical emphasis (Luke AB [1981] 238).

[24] Both repentance and conversion are presented together in Luke which Conzelmann interprets not just as a rhetorical matter. Repentance represents more an inner psychological understanding, while conversion is the outward manifestation of it.

It is within his study of the changes in Lukan eschatology that Conzelmann makes his treatment of μετάνοια.[25] He argues that the alteration in the sense of the term is minimal and results from variations in Luke's eschatology and psychology of faith. Since Conzelmann reckons that Luke relies mainly on *Q* and uses Mark with some modifications, he describes as Luke's distinct emphasis the combined use of μετάνοια and ἐπιστρέφω.[26] With this, μετάνοια is no longer a term describing a total and immediate conversion, as he argues is the case in Mark. It now becomes a process that includes an internal transformation (repentance) and a transformation of the deeds (conversion) that become conditions for forgiveness and salvation.[27]

A main problem with Conzelmann's approach is his understanding of eschatology in Luke. Although Luke acknowledges the delay of the parousia, there is not however a lack of eschatological emphasis in his soteriological approach nor any attempt at substituting his salvation-history emphasis.[28] Because of his intentional eschatological emphasis, Luke equips his readers for

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[25] Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960) 100.

[26] Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960) 100.

[27] Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960) 100.

[28] In his sketch of Lukan theology, Fitzmyer delineates some of the different aspects of Luke's dealing with the end-time expectation. First, Luke omits references to the imminence of the eschaton (see, 4:15 [cf. Mark 1:15]; 9:27 [cf. Mark 9:1]. Second, there are instances in which the delay of the end-time is implied (cf. 12:38,45; 13:8). Third, the eschatological discourse of Mark 13 loses eschatological emphasis in the Lukan version (chap. 21). Fourth, there are nonetheless other Lukan references that limit the early gospel tradition to the imminence of the eschatological judgement (cf. 3:7, 9, 17; 10:9; 21:27). Fifth, Luke even adds a saying concerning the imminence of the eschaton (cf. 10:11 [contrast, Matt 10:14]; 21:31 [contrast, Mark 13:29]; 21:36). Therefore, there is no proper ground for fully dismissing Luke's eschatological interest. Furthermore, Fitzmyer refers to Conzelmann's own acknowledgement of "a certain postponement of the Parousia" in Mark 13:10 (cf. Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke [1960] 126). The shift in accent is not to be taken as a dismissal of eschatological emphasis but an enhancing of the value of Jesus' sayings for the present time (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 231-5).

that final moment, of which the timing is unknown. Thus, there is the need to be ready (12:35-48, 17:22-37). The delay of the parousia does not act as a present deterrent but as the time to get ready for such a future event. Therefore, there is no reason for removing the reception of salvation outside the boundaries of eschatological expectations.

Another problem with Conzelmann's approach is the overall ethical emphasis he gives to conversion. Probably due to a lack of a linguistic analysis of terms such as μετάνοια and ἐπιστρέφω he misses an important aspect of conversion, namely, the "turning to God".[29] Furthermore, the lack of any reference to such concepts in the infancy narrative or the parables of the lost and found in Luke 15 is a remarkable absence in consonance nonetheless with his limited treatment of relevant texts.

2.2 R. Michiels[30]

As part of the ongoing francophone debate on conversion during the first half of the sixties,[31] Michiels begins his article with a brief consideration of the Lukan eschatological motif as understood by Conzelmann[32] and Schürmann[33] concluding that since the concept of μετάνοια becomes relevant in the

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[29] See, Marshall, Historian and Theologian (1988[3]) 194.

[30] "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 42-78.

[31] Cf. Dupont, "Repentir et Conversion," (1960); idem, "Conversion," (1960); Aubin, Le Problème de la "conversion" (1963); Giblet, "Pénitence," (1963).

[32] Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960).

[33] Schürmann, "Evangelienschrift und Kirchliche Unterweisung," (1962) 48-73.

discussion, there is the need for a word study of conversion-related terms in the New Testament. From there he moves into the actual study of conversion-related texts with the use of *Redaktionsgeschichte*, first in the book of Acts and then in the third gospel, to find confirmation for what he has already concluded from Acts.[34]

Concerning the use of μετάνοια in the synoptics, Michiels argues that although there is a common understanding of the term in all three synoptics, in Luke there is a development in the use of the term. Due to Luke's emphasis on salvation history in which salvation is accessible to all through the apostolic preaching and accomplished in the midst of the church, for "le temps de l'Église est le temps par excellence de la miséricorde et du pardon et par conséquent le temps qui donne à tous la possibilité de la repentance et de la conversion."[35] Thus, μετάνοια only defines a part of the process, not the whole of the conversion experience. "[N]e s'agit plus ici d'un appel à la *metanoia* en vue du royaume eschatologique de Dieu, mais en vue d'une entrée dans l'Église".[36] Μετάνοια becomes no longer an eschatological term but the moral side of conversion,[37] the condition for the forgiveness of sins.[38]

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[34] Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 54.

[35] Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 58.

[36] Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 55.

[37] For example, in 17:3-4, "l'ocurrence le verbe ne possède pas un sens eschatologique, mais vise une attitude présente, d'ordre moral et individuel du chrétien" (Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," [1965] 57).

[38] Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 76.

Michiels' contribution reveals its value in the way it depicts Luke's own understanding of conversion based on a synoptic comparative analysis of such a term as μετάνοια, which he considers essential for the discussion. The main problem lies in Michiels' de-eschatologizing of repentance and its reduction to merely a *raison d'entrée*, as the prerequisite to entering the church. The apostolic preaching of salvation is accomplished in the church, so that Luke's soteriology becomes mainly ecclesiology.[39]

2.3 John Navone[40]

In his systematic approach to twenty Lukan themes, Navone introduces his analysis of conversion with a statistical study of concepts like μετανοεῖν and μετάνοια, στρέφειν and ἐπιστρέφειν to show the relevance these terms receive in the Lukan corpus when compared with the other synoptics. Then he divides the rest of the article into two main sections, the first dealing with the third gospel and the second with Acts.

The first element emphasised is the fact that although Jesus defines his ministry as a call to sinners, which is common to the synoptics, Luke adds that he has called them "to repentance", which is the only expected response to Jesus' eschatological call. Furthermore, Navone discloses a dichotomous attitude towards μετάνοια in the third gospel. On the one hand, the Pharisees represent

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[39] Michiels, "Conception Lucanienne de la Conversion," (1965) 76.

[40] "Conversion," (1970) 38-46, included in his book Themes of St. Luke; *idem*, "Conversion Dynamic," (1992) 323-31.

those who reject Jesus' call to enter the kingdom of God, while, on the other hand, it is only the sinners who accept Jesus' call to the kingdom, for "they alone have the necessary spirit of μετάνοια, humility and compunction, they are willing to admit their sinfulness".[41]

There is a universal call to repentance based on Luke 13:1-5 that together with the following parable of the barren fig tree (13:6-9) would equally appeal to all Jewish people. They all need to repent. However, such repentance does not convey, according to Navone, a return to the law but to "the person to whom the lost one belongs and who rejoices at the return"[42] according to the three parables of Luke 15. There, also God's salvific mercy and initiative are emphasized.

Moving into the contours of the Christian community, divine forgiveness and human repentance are to become visible in the interaction of the Christian fellowship. This in turn stresses the individual appeal to a moral conduct on the side of the one who converts.[43]

Twenty years after his work Themes of St. Luke, Navone speaks of a *conversion dynamic* in the way the Christian church uses those basic themes to

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[41] Navone, "Conversion," (1970) 39. He also reinforces the argument with the examples of the Jews (12:39) and the towns of Galilee, both depicted as unrepenting, while Nineveh (11:29-32), Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah (10:13-35) showed a more receptive attitude towards repentance.

[42] Navone, "Conversion," (1970) 40.

[43] Navone, "Conversion," (1970) 40-1.

foster conversion, described by him "both as an event and a lifelong process".[44] Those themes interrelate and depict a threefold dimension, namely, "(1) the interiority of a knowing and living subject; (2) the exteriority of a decision making agent; (3) the eschatological fulfilment of that subject agent".[45] Such a threefold structure, applied to conversion, is illustrated by Navone as follows: conversion conveys a cognitive-affective decision, affecting the individual's perception of his or her own reality, "I have not come to call the just but sinners to repentance" (5:32); the external consequences of human responsibility and decisions, "Unless you repent, you will all perish" (13:5); and the eschatological fulfilment of the individual's decision in accord with God's grace, "there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine virtuous men who have no need of repentance" (15:7).[46]

In the first of his two contributions to the topic, Navone rightly includes the conflictual attitudes towards Jesus in his discussion of conversion, which is part of Luke's emphasis. Also important are the emphases on the universality of repentance, divine initiative, and the stress on the individual but without overlooking the communal dimension of conversion. However, in Navone's second article, the fact is that from the outset he limits the scope of the Lukan themes to "illuminate dimensions of life in the body of Christ and the temple of

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[44] Navone, "Conversion Dynamic," (1992) 323.

[45] Navone, "Conversion Dynamic," (1992) 323.

[46] In Navone's "Conversion Dynamic," (1992) 329-31, he displays a chart in which he illustrates the threefold dimension of Luke's major themes with text from the third gospel.

his Spirit".[47] He also deprives them of a social context from which they gained meaning and makes the interests of his understanding of the Christian community the parameter of his interpretation for all the Lukan themes. The separate treatment of Luke and Acts that characterised the first article disappears in the second. Furthermore, and of particular relevance to the present investigation, Navone is ready to acknowledge a process of conversion in Acts,[48] without mentioning the possibility in Luke.[49]

Concerning the threefold structure of conversion dynamics he presents in his 1992 article, the fact that it equally applies to all major themes in Luke, as Navone himself acknowledges, makes it too general and vague. It dwells too much in the interiority of the individual and pays no attention to the influence of the surrounding context. It could even be asked whether that structure could not be equally applied to any New Testament writing and still function, which creates uncertainty over the contribution it makes to the understanding of conversion in Luke.

2. 4 Stephen C. Barton[50]

In his study of the spirituality of the gospels, Barton acknowledges the prominence of repentance and conversion in the Lukan corpus, and gives three

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[47] "Conversion Dynamic," (1992) 323.

[48] According to Navone, the elements involved in the conversion process in Acts, are "(1) *metanoia*, (2) baptism, (3) the remission of sin, (4) the gift of the Holy Spirit, (5) participation in the fulfilment of the salvation promises, (6) liberation and salvation" ("Conversion," [1970] 43).

[49] "Conversion," (1970) 39-43.

[50] Spirituality (1992) esp. 77-83.

reasons for it. Firstly, Luke is seeking to facilitate the appropriation of repentance and conversion. In the context of Luke's emphasis on the conversion of Gentiles "not familiar with the strong biblical tradition of repentance and turning back to God which would be so well known to Jews"[51] a more exemplary and graphic presentation was required. Secondly, as a warning against complacency, Luke warns against a possible dichotomy in his readers between faith and life-style.[52] Thirdly, from a theological and spiritual point of view, Barton argues that Luke deals with stories of repentance and conversion in order to convey the universality of salvation. Thus, salvation comes not only to those socially despised like a prostitute, a toll collector or a criminal, but also, mainly in Acts, to Gentiles.[53]

Barton sketches four texts that he considers representative conversion stories in Luke. First, he defines the conversion of the woman with the ointment (7:36-50) as "a story of repentance, conversion and salvation" with the observation that salvation comes to one considered to be a sinner, which accords with the preceding remark about the Son of Man's befriending of toll collectors and sinners (7:24-35).[54] In the parable of the lost son, the younger son is also a sinner because of his attitude towards his father. When the lost son returns

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[51] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 82.

[52] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 82-3.

[53] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 83.

[54] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 78.

home, repentance, forgiveness, joy and celebration are present. In the reaction of the elder brother, Barton assesses the Lukan emphasis on repentance as required from all, the "righteous" and the "sinner", the "insider" and the "outsider".[55] In the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10), Jesus' mercy and forgiveness precede Zacchaeus' repentance and forgiveness which become evident in his gracious charitable actions towards the poor. Zacchaeus receives Jesus joyfully and salvation is granted to him "today".[56] Such a realized-eschatological assertion is also present in Barton's final conversion story, namely, that of the penitent criminal on the cross (23:39-43). The criminal confesses his sin to Jesus and repents, and thus Jesus forgives him and grants him salvation. The soteriological importance of Jesus' death is acknowledged in "that it is only by dying that Jesus is able to save".[57]

In short, Barton interprets Luke's understanding of repentance and conversion as follows. Repentance is the indispensable requirement and prerequisite of forgiveness and salvation. It involves a change of heart to which the "poor" are more receptive. There is a foretaste of eschatological joy, which in some occasions becomes evident in table-fellowship.[58]

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[55] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 80.

[56] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 80-1.

[57] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 81.

[58] Barton, Spirituality (1992) 81-2.

This approach offers a good introduction to the wider issue of conversion in Luke. In fact, Barton's work points in the right direction, including, as he does, an eschatological understanding, a link between different elements of Luke's theology, and the interaction of both theological and social elements, but all of these hampered by the constraints of the book in which the section on conversion appears as part of the wider analysis of Lukan spirituality. Thus, there is no consistent correlation of those elements considered as significant in the different conversion stories with the broader picture of the theology of Luke or with other themes in the third gospel. For example, the study of joy is dealt with before that of repentance and conversion. Also the depiction of Luke's teaching on the use of wealth as a characteristic of the Christian character and not as effecting repentance and conversion is insufficient.

2.5 Ronald D. Witherup[59]

In a very succinct work addressed to a general audience, Witherup asserts the importance of conversion in Luke not only on the basis of the occurrence of the term μετάνοια and μετανοέω more often than in the other synoptics but also in the fact that Luke links conversion more expressly with themes such as "forgiveness and reconciliation, salvation, the mercy of God, and joy".[60] He accentuates the centrality of conversion in Luke as already at work in the

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[59] "Conversion in Luke," (1994) 44-56 as part of his book Conversion in the New Testament. From here on referred to as Conversion.

[60] Witherup, Conversion (1994) 45.

infancy narratives, disclosing God's saving action towards people, and also relevant in defining the ministry of John the Baptist and the teaching of Jesus.[61]

In his analysis of Luke 15, Witherup emphasizes the divine initiative and mercy reflected in the shepherd's attitude to go and seek one lost sheep and the joy resulting from repentance. Also relevant to the present study is his acknowledgement of the lack of a conversion or repentance vocabulary that nonetheless is implied in the story.[62]

The fact that Luke adds "repentance" to Jesus' definition of his ministry (5:32) makes Witherup link repentance with forgiveness as required for conversion. This interdependence between forgiveness and repentance becomes a major difference from the other synoptic in that it "personalizes" conversion. It is not the call of a nation or a people but of an individual to repentance.[63] Finally, it is important to notice the stress put on the horizontal dimension of conversion evidenced, for example, in Zacchaeus' giving of alms after his conversion.[64]

2.6 Summary

The aim of this review has been to show some of the positions held and contributions to studies on the issue of conversion in the gospel of Luke. The

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[61] Witherup, Conversion (1994) 46.

[62] Witherup, Conversion (1994) 48.

[63] Witherup, Conversion (1994) 55-6.

[64] Witherup, Conversion (1994) 51.

use of the *Redaktionsgeschichte* method has proved useful to identify more clearly the Lukan contribution vis-à-vis the other synoptic gospels. However, it has often been used mainly to show the non-eschatological but salvation-historical or ecclesiological interpretation of repentance and conversion. The problematic of Luke's eschatological stance has been the main scope of the earliest works, in which the concept of μετάνοια has been the focal point of analysis. In general, there has been an absence of a holistic analysis of conversion-related issues in Luke. The treatment of texts has been, at best, very limited both in the number of texts and in the extent of their analysis. The social connotations in the texts have been found wanting or absent, and no work seems to sufficiently recognise these three aspects. Therefore, another work on conversion in the third gospel seems to be sufficiently justifiable as it emphasizes the Lukan redactional activity displayed both in congenial theological and social motifs. Furthermore, it works with a wider range of texts treated in more depth to prove that Luke is using a consistent paradigm of his own to convey his emphases.

3 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Conversion language in the New Testament in general, and in Luke in particular, inherits its meaning from the Old Testament use of equivalent expressions. The main term used in the Old Testament is שׁוּב, "to turn back, to

return", which is used in both its literal and figurative senses.[65] The idea is the return to the point of departure, which becomes relevant in its theological connotation "to return to God", "to repent".[66] Conversion entails "the return to the original relationship with Yahweh" (2 Kings 22-23; Amos 4:6-11).[67] Implied in the idea of a turning is a "turning from" and a "turning to". Thus, a main emphasis is a turning from sin (cf. 1 Kg 13:33; Is 59:20; Jer 15:7; 18:8; Ezek 3:19; 13:22). This new situation is evidenced by trust in God (cf. Is 30:15; Jer 3:22-23; Hos 14:4-5) and in obedience to him (Jer 26:3-5).

The LXX translates שׁוּב as ἐπιστρέφω, a term known in classical literature, instead of μετανοέω which translates the Hebrew נָחַם ("to regret something" or "to alter one's purpose out of pity"; cf. 1 Sam 15:29; Jer 18:10). One of the meanings of שׁוּב is "the turning of the soul to piety or the divine".[68] There is some proximity in meaning between שׁוּב and נָחַם for instance in Jer 8:6 (עַל־רָעָתוֹ אֵין אִישׁ נִחָם, "no one repents of wickedness") and Jer 31:19 (LXX; MT 31:19) (כִּי־אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבִי נִחַמְתִּי, "for after I had turned away I repented") expressing people's turning away from sin.

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[65] BDB "שׁוּב," 996-1000. The term appears some 1056 times in the Old Testament, 118 times with religious connotations.

[66] Soggin, "שׁוּב," TLOT 1.1314. Cf. Dietrich, Die Unkehr (1936).

[67] Soggin, "שׁוּב," TLOT 1.1315-6. See, Amos 4:6:13; Hos 5:15-6:5; Jer 3:12-24.

[68] Laubach, "Conversion," (1975) 354.

Analysis of the conversion terminology in Luke shows that conversion is mainly described in Luke by the term ἐπιστρέφω, which appears in the New Testament on 36 occasions, half of them in the Lukan corpus. The use of the term is multivalent although its primary meaning is "to turn about", "to turn around".[69] It is the turning from one point to another. For instance, in the Lukan infancy narrative after Jesus' dedication in the temple, "they [Jesus and his parents] returned (ἐπέστρεψαν) to Galilee" (2:39) or in the story of Jairus' daughter, the spirit of the girl returned (ἐπέστρεψεν) to her (8:55).

A second sense of the term is of a moral or theological nature conveying a change or turn in one's way of life. Such a change in one's way of life must be taken as a positive change. It is a change in "'one's way of living as God would want' or 'to change and live like God would want one to live'".[70] An example of its moral implications is found in the words of Jesus exhorting his disciples to forgive a brother's sins as many times as he turns to you (ἐπιστρέψῃ πρὸς σε) repented (Luke 17:4). Bertram asserts that this example brings together both an external and internal turning, namely, the change in the inward attitude manifested in a physical turning to the harmed person.[71]

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[69] Liddell and Scott, "ἐπιστρέφω," 302. With this meaning it can be found in Luke 2:39; 8:55; 17:4, 31; 22:32; Acts 9:40; 15:36; 16:18.

[70] Louw and Nida, "ἐπιστρέφω," 510.

[71] Bertram, "ἐπιστρέφω," (1971) 726. He also refers to the close relationship between ἐπιστρέφω and μετανοέω evident in the text which will be later considered in this study.

Thus, concerning the theological significance of ἐπιστρέφω as the "turning towards God"[72] or conversion, it is with the exception of two instances in the Pauline corpus (2 Cor 3:16; 1 Thess 1:9), one in 1 Pet 2:25, and a parallel reference in the other two synoptics to a text from Isaiah (Mark 4:12; Matt 13:15) that the term mainly used (in the New Testament) by Luke.[73] It is used to define the ministry of John the Baptist with the expression "ἐπιστρέφειν καρδίας ἐπί" (1:17), an idiom literally meaning, "to turn hearts to"[74] which Luke has received from *L*. It is only in Acts, of the whole New Testament, that ἐπιστροφή is used as a technical term for conversion (cf. Acts 15:3).

Concerning μετανοεῖν, it is the change of life following a change of thought and behaviour, "'to repent, to change one's way, repentance'".[75] It is not only an inner change or contrition but also a behavioural transformation. There is not a great variation in its Lukan use when compared with the other synoptic gospels, except in the frequency with which it appears.[76] Thus, in Mark μετάνοια appears in reference to the preaching of John the Baptist (Mark 1:4), which finds its parallel in Luke 3:3. As for Matthew, it appears on two

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[72] Louw and Nida, "ἐπιστρέφω," 510. The implication is of a positive alteration of attitude and disposition.

[73] There is the possible interpretation of the two instances in which ἐπιστρέφω appears in James (5:19-20) as close to the theological intention of the term. Most occurrences of the term in the Lukan corpus meaning conversion occur in Acts (cf. 3:19; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 28:27).

[74] Louw and Nida, "ἐπιστρέφω καρδίας ἐπί," 300.

[75] Louw and Nida, "μετάνοια," 510.

[76] Μετάνοια appears once in Mark (1:4), twice in Matthew (3:8, 11) and eleven times in the Lukan corpus (Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20). In the whole of the New Testament, it appears a total of 22 times (Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:9, 10; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 6:1, 6; 12:17; 2 Pet 3:9).

occasions, the first (Matt 3:8) with its parallel in Luke 3:8, and the second (Matt 3:11) without a direct parallel, but with a use similar to the previous one. In other instances in Luke in which μετάνοια appears (cf. 5:32; 15:7; 24:47), its use is similar to that common to the three synoptics. In its verbal form, μετανοέω, Mark uses the term twice, firstly in a call to repent as the response to the announcement by Jesus of the coming of the Kingdom (Mark 1:15; par. Matt 4:17), and secondly in a reference to the mission of the twelve, when sent in pairs "to proclaim that all should repent (μετανοῶσιν)" (Mark 6:12), which Luke changes for an emphasis on the preaching of the kingdom of God. In Matthew there are four other references besides the one parallel to Mark mentioned above. Of these, the first one refers to the ministry of John in similar terms to that of Jesus (Matt 3:2). The other three appear as Jesus laments how both the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida and this generation have rejected their chance to repent (Matt 11:20-21, par. Luke 10:13; 12:41, par. Luke 11:32). Luke's other references include Jesus' warning to his listeners to repent lest they perish (13:3, 5); the joy in heaven over sinners who repent (15:7, 10); the denial that if people were sent someone from the dead they would repent (16:30); and the more common use of the concept referring to the sorrow for a wrong action that should receive forgiveness as many times as it happens (17:3, 4).

Therefore, the use of μετάνοια/μετανοέω in Luke does not differ in general from its use in the other synoptics. If anything, it can be said that the use of the

term is variable in all the three synoptic gospels. Sometimes the emphasis on repentance is removed from its source,[77] while other times it is added in significant texts such as 5:32 in which Jesus says that his ministry is directed towards the repentance of sinners otherwise unqualified in Mark (2:17, par. Matt 9:13), or 24:47 in which the content of the salvific message focuses on repentance and forgiveness of sins.[78] Looking at the diversity of sources from which he draws these terms in his gospel (3:3 derives from Mark, 3:8 and 15:7 from *Q*, 24:47 from *L*, and 5:32 is a redactional inclusion) indicates that the intended meaning is fairly traditional in Luke, but the relevance is in the repeated use of the concept of repentance that is central to his theology.

Finally, there is the need to consider Green's helpful distinction between "term" and "concept", relevant to the linguistic analysis here. According to Green

> [r]epentance (along with 'turning') is a key term describing one's proper response to the offer of salvation in Acts (e.g., Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22) but as a term it is not often found in the Third Gospel. The *concept* of repentance is present everywhere in the Gospel of Luke, however".[79]

This distinction will be duly supported and evidenced in the following study of Luke's conversion accounts which will show, even if implicitly, that,

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[77] Cf. 9:6 in which the preaching of the gospel takes the place of the preaching of repentance (Mark 6:12).

[78] Fitzmyer illustrates the complementary relationship between μετανοεῖν and ἐπιστρέφειν as that of the two sides of a same coin. While μετάνοια bears some negative connotations for it is the change from sin and deviation, ἐπιστρέφω bears other more positive connotations for it refers to the return to God (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 238)

[79] Green, Theology (1995) 107.

repentance becomes an essential element in the giving and reception of salvation conveyed in the narratives.

	μετανοέω	μετάνοια	ἐπιστρέφω	ἐπιστροφή
NEW TESTAMENT	34	22	36	1
Luke/Acts	14 (9/5)	11 (5/6)	18 (7/11)	1 (-/1)
Matthew	5	2	4	
Mark	2	1	4	
John			1	
Romans		1		
2 Corinthians	1	2	1	
Galatians			1	
1 Thessalonians			1	
2 Timothy		1		
Hebrews		3		
James			2	
1 Peter			1	
2 Peter		1	1	
Revelation	12		2	

Chart 1: Statistical Analysis of Conversion Related Terms

4 METHODOLOGY

In order to approach the task described above, *Redaktionsgeschichte* will be the main tool. Although the definition and scope of the method have already been extensively presented elsewhere,[80] it should be noted that one of the important contributions of redaction criticism that must be commented on is the acknowledgement of the evangelists as theologians, and not mere compilers of existing traditions or sources. This is a central presupposition of this work: the fact that in Luke's handling of the material his particular theological

[80] Cf. Osborne, "Redaction Criticism," (1992); Sanders and Davies, "Redaction Criticism," (1989) 201-23; McKnight, "Form and Redaction Criticism," (1989); Perrin, What is Redaction Criticism? (1969). For examples of how the method is applied to each of the synoptics, see, Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960); Marxen, Mark the Evangelist (1969); Trilling, Das Wahre Israel (1975³).

understanding and concerns become generally identifiable. There is also the now-disputed idea that redaction criticism helps to trace a single community behind the individual evangelist or that the gospel was addressed to a single community.[81] The possible definition and reconstruction of such an individual community both in time and in space is beyond the aim of the present work. It is Luke and his understanding of conversion that lies at the heart of this study.

Commenting on the overly-narrow understanding of conversion by many modern Christians, Schmidt states that "a highly personalized, individualized, privatized version of Christianity that reflects individual transformation but fails to impact social relationships, societal structures and corporate lifestyle writes its own obituary in one word – irrelevance".[82] Luke's portrayal of conversion to his generation acknowledges the transformation of the individual, but not as happening in a social vacuum as a solely internal experience. On the contrary, matters of how such a transformation ought to affect the individual's relation to the larger society, and how conversion affects the creation of community relationships are at the heart of Luke's theology of conversion.

Conversion poses a challenge to the way society is construed and how it should be structured. It is not just a matter between the individual and God, but proves itself in how it shows itself in community and social interactions. Conversion is

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[81] See, Bauckham (ed.), The Gospels for All Christians (1998). For the most thorough attempt to delineate the nature of the "Lukan community", see Esler, Community and Gospel (1987).

[82] Schmidt, Conversion (1980) vii.

the acceptance and reception of the reality of the Kingdom of God in response to Jesus' offer, and thus it speaks of a realm of both divine and human interrelations and mutual commitments.

Thus, important also for this study is the examination of the role social values play in the texts under consideration. Special attention will be paid to the contrasts established by Luke between social groups present in the text, to their social situation and how this affects the reception of the ministry of Jesus. Furthermore, the effect of conversion is expressed in ethical and social terms, so that it will be necessary to read them in their own context to fully appreciate their full scope.

The aim is to demonstrate the existence of what will be called a *paradigm of conversion* in the third gospel and how it fits in Luke's larger theological framework. By paradigm it is meant here "a typical example or pattern of something; a pattern or model".[83] Hays defines paradigms as those "stories or summary accounts of characters who model exemplary conduct (or negative paradigms: characters who model reprehensive conduct)".[84] The concept of "model" here is not that of the social sciences.[85] Nor is "paradigm" explained by Dibelius' definition as part of his form critical structuring of texts. As

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[83] New Oxford Dictionary (1998) 1344.

[84] Hays, Moral Vision (1996) 209.

[85] For the social sciences, "model" can be defined as a fixed mould built from cultural patterns presupposed in a given society and then applied to a text. The presupposition is a contextualized society at the time, in contrast to the highly uncontextualized societies of the present. For definitions of

McKnight presents it, "the narratives of the deeds of Jesus were introduced as examples to illustrate and support the message. These *examples* constitute the oldest Christian narrative style, and hence Dibelius suggests the name 'paradigm' for this category of narrative."[86] Paradigm here is a pattern or model built on the sequence of various elements, namely, those identifying the presuppositions, contexts, requirements, responses and consequences that in combination emphasize a given theological understanding of conversion, namely that portrayed by Luke. It is not an imposed pattern on the text that would require all the elements to appear in every pericope in order to work. It is, rather, a reflection on major Lukan concerns that surface in his presentation of the conversion material.

5 PROCEDURE

Concerning the way this investigation is arranged, the first two chapters of this work will deal with literary accounts of conversion both from Jewish literature and the writings of different Greco-Roman philosophical schools dating from a period similar to that of the third gospel. The idea is to offer a view of how those writings present conversion, its demands and consequences in order to get a literary perspective from the time for the present reading of the topic in Luke's writing. The character of the texts involved in these two first chapters is

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models from the social sciences, see, Elliot, What is Social-Scientific Criticism? (1993) 42-3; Esler, Community and Gospel (1987) 9; Malina, "Social Sciences," (1982) 14.

[86] McKnight, What is Form Criticism? (1969) 21. Cf. Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (1970) 25.

diverse, ranging from references to conversion mostly by way of rite of entry descriptions, to apologetic on behalf of a given religion, to a description of the experience undergone by the convert, and all this often in an implicit way. As a consequence, the arrangement will be on the basis of the effects of conversion in the (prospective) convert. To organise the multiple data, and from the angle of the social requirements and consequences of conversion, two main areas will be considered for the chapter on Conversion in Judaism, namely, family and community, and possessions. For the chapter on Conversion to Philosophy, the approach will be first, a general overview of the philosophical aims, methods of expansion and approaches to community life, concluding with an extended analysis of Conversion and the Cynics.

Following these two chapters, there will be the analysis of a number of narratives in the Gospel of Luke in which the main scenario is a conversion account,[87] following the action sequencing of the text. This arrangement will allow relevant changes in those texts with a synoptic parallel to be noticed, and also possible emphatic elements in the way the text is presented to be discovered. Six chapters will be devoted to this. Once the main argument has been stated and developed, another chapter will be dedicated to what has been

[87] There are two texts that may require some justification: the conversion of a woman (7:36-50) and the conversion of Zacchaeus (19:1-10) both considered by some scholars as presupposing an already existing and previous conversion. For both sufficient justification will be given for their inclusion in this study as conversion stories. The preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-17) has also been included because of the added emphasis on conversion not present in the parallel texts and because of its aptness to the Lukan conversion paradigm.

Luke 5:1-11, the call of Peter, is not included in the analysis because I regard it primarily as a *call*-narrative rather than a *conversion*-narrative.

called a "non-conversion" story or "negative paradigm" for it serves as the negative counterpart to the other conversion accounts. Final conclusions will reflect the results of the study of the paradigm of conversion in the third gospel.

By studying the paradigm of conversion in the Third Gospel significant elements of Luke's theology that apply to his larger understanding of salvation and its effects will be displayed.

1. CONVERSION IN THE JEWISH MILIEU

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A monotheistic[1] observance provokes a number of situations in which a person entering an exclusive commitment to an "only one God" religion faces particular difficulties. It is not only a matter of worshipping a deity, as happened with the existing cults contemporary to Judaism and Christianity during the first century, it is also a question of content. As Nock suggests, there is no idea of conversion to a cult since cults do not have any doctrinal constraint and do not make absolute claims on their devotees. A person adheres but does not convert to a cult.[2]

Besides having to make a decision on broader grounds than what kind of worship an individual is inclined toward, there is also the social cost of such a resolution. It becomes a question of priorities and allegiances. In order to envisage the social

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[1] There is quite a debate on whether "monotheism" is an appropriate term to use. In fact, there have been recent attempts to reject it. Moberly affirms that "the confession of YHWH as 'one' is opaque to the question of 'monotheism' (a problematic concept whose use is in need of serious reevaluation)" ("Shema," [1999] 132-3); Hayman contends that "it is hardly ever appropriate to use the term monotheism to describe the Jewish idea of God" ("Monotheism," [1991] 2); Sawyer argues that "the plain meaning of the biblical text as a whole is far from monotheistic. Monotheism is not a major concern of the biblical writers" ("Alternatives to Monotheism," [1984] 179). However, the term is applied in this chapter following the generally accepted *minimum common denominator* use of the concept as the belief in one God. A recent example of such general use is the title of the book which is a collection of papers from *the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism (1999). See also, Hurtado, "Jewish Monotheism," (1998) 3-26; Dunn, Partings (1991) chps. 9-11; Rainbow, "Jewish Monotheism," (1991) 78-91.

[2] Nock, Conversion (1961) 7-16.

effects of conversion, the writings of Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenistic Jew, of Flavius Josephus, a Palestinian Jew, of the sect of Qumran, and of the anonymous author of *Joseph and Aseneth*, will be analysed to help in the contemporary understanding of conversion. The reason for such a selection is that these works provide a good illustration of the diversity within Judaism in the first century. More than that, these works will introduce a twofold set of evidences relating to conversion. On the one hand, they will expose cases of conversions of Gentiles to Judaism, while, on the other hand, they will provide examples of Jewish people committing themselves to one of the Jewish sects.

In the study of both the writings of Philo and Josephus on conversion, an introductory note will be provided to deal with the character and value of the given writings. Given the apologetic nature of the works, rhetorical and propagandistic motivations at work in Philo's and Josephus' writings must be taken in to consideration when assessing the relevance of their accounts. They are not to be taken as a description of what was actually happening at the time but valued as what these authors thought about conversion. The writings of Qumran sprang from a community that defined its identity over against or as a reaction to that of their larger society. All these particularities lend a subjective tone to the writings that will be considered in the interpretation of the data they disclose on conversion.

1.2 PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

1.2.1. Introduction

With a clear apologetic emphasis, the Alexandrian Jew Philo (c.25 BCE – 50 CE) presents Israel as a superior people so that "it is given, therefore, to the most excellent race to see the most excellent of things, namely, the really living God; for the name Israel, being interpreted, means 'seeing God'" (ὁρῶν θεόν).[3] The contrast is made with the rest of the nations that are described in a negative way.[4] Thus, from Philo's presentation, God is depicted siding with the Jewish people, which in turn implies that those who oppose the Jews face God's wrath.[5] The temple becomes the admiration of Gentiles[6] and the Jewish law influences Greek laws.[7] The work is intended for a Jewish audience so that McKnight concludes, "Philo's work is essentially intended to bolster Jewish self-identification".[8]

The logical conclusion of such a biased reading of the relation between Jews and Gentiles was the accusation by Gentiles against the Jews of misanthropy. However, it should be acknowledged that the accusation also came from the lack

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[3] *Congr.* 51; *Leg.* 3-4.

[4] Philo describes Egypt as "a seed bed of evil" (*Leg.* 166). Further on this, see McKnight, Light (1991) 22, 130 n.62.

[5] *Flacc.* 116, 121-4, 169-75; *Leg.* 137-9; *Mos.* 1.146.

[6] *Spec.* 1.73.

[7] *Spec.* 4.61.

[8] McKnight, Light (1991) 70. See, Conley, "Philo's Rhetoric," (1984) 343-71; Goodenough, "Philo's Exposition," (1933) 109-25.

of understanding and the rejection of Jewish practices on the part of the Gentiles. When living together affected the mutual understanding and respect, it brought about, on the part of the Jews a defensive attitude towards Gentile opposition to their religious practices in the Diaspora.[9] It should be noticed, nonetheless, that Philo is also open to see Gentiles coming to Judaism.[10] He asserts that "their judgement led them to make the passage to piety" (ὅτι πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἠξίωσαν μεθορμίσασθαι), with the result that on them is bestowed the same treatment and consideration due to a Jew by birth.[11] What such a "passage to piety" involves, according to Philo's account, will be the focus of this study.

There is also a large set of material in Philo devoted to another kind of conversion, that of a Jew to one of the religious groups within Judaism. Although the starting point for the prospective candidate differed according to whether they were a Gentile coming to Judaism or a Jew joining a Jewish sect, what Philo describes as the social consequences resulting from a positive decision are in both cases within the scope of this study.

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[9] For instance, in Alexandria, the Jewish community saw their synagogue destroyed (*Flacc.* 48); their houses looted (*Flacc.* 56); and even many of them were even killed (*Flacc.* 65-71).

[10] *Flacc.* 94; *Leg.* 161; *Virt.* 103-9; *Dec.* 41, 64.

[11] *Spec.* 1.51-2.

1.2.2 Social Requirements and Consequences of Conversion

The radical demand of Judaism of allegiance to the one and only God became the centrepiece of all the subsequent requirements for converts.[12] In contrast with most of the religions of the time, which were polytheistic and thus did not require loyalty to only one god, Judaism declared fidelity to the only God without any possibility of association with other deities.[13] This first and most important requirement placed converts in a new and unfamiliar situation of conflict that affected the very basis of their social identity. Their situation changed from a condition of multiple cultic allegiances, which did not create any significant social difficulty, to an exclusive religious position in which the prospective convert stood out against his fellow citizens.

Introductory rituals were required in Judaism from converts. Such rituals certified the total adhesion of the convert and thus their integration into society. According to Chesnutt, there were "three initiatory steps to be taken by proselytes: circumcision, immersion and the offering of sacrifice in the

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[12] Although attention is paid to converts to Judaism or to one of the religious groups within it in this work, there are many other allusions in Philo to people attracted by Judaism without actually becoming proselytes. Such references are used to convey Philo's conviction of the Jewish superiority over other peoples. For instance, Philo exalts the virtues of Ptolemy, surnamed Philadelphus, ruler of Egypt "in all the qualities which make a good ruler, he excelled not only his contemporaries, but all who have arisen in the past" (*Mos.* 2.29). The king is depicted as "having conceived an ardent affection for our laws" (*Mos.* 2.31) who "thinking that God's guiding care must have led the king to busy himself in such undertaking" (*Mos.* 2.32) projected the translation of the laws of the Jews into Greek (*Mos.* 2.31-32).

[13] For the purpose of this study, the premise of Dunn is accepted, namely, that "we need not explore here the early history of Jewish monotheism. For us it is enough that in post-exilic period it became (or had already become) a fundamental dogma of Judaism." Partings (1991) 19.

Temple,"[14] although Philo mainly refers to circumcision.[15] His approach to circumcision is twofold. On the one hand, he speaks of circumcision in its literal and physical sense,[16] while, on the other hand, Philo speaks of the symbolic meanings of circumcision.[17] The underlying idea is that "the evil belief, therefore, needs to be excised from the mind with any others that are not loyal to God" (πονηρὰν οὖν δόξαν ἐκτμητέον τῆς διανοίας καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ὅσαι μὴ φιλόθεοι).[18] This twofold interpretation clearly relies on the symbolic interpretation of circumcision, pointing to a right mind which prevented the temptation of pleasures and pointing beyond man himself to God. [19] In the Diaspora situation where Philo found himself, a convert to Judaism would have to face the rejection that such a ritual provoked among the non-Jewish constituency. Philo acknowledges that circumcision is a practice which has been

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[14] From Death to Life (1995) 155.

[15] There is no reference in Philo to immersion and the references to sacrifice do not imply it was a requirement for converts. Chesnutt is right when he denies, based on the length of the Philonic source and its direct dealing with the issue of proselytism, that the "silence on proselyte immersion is fortuitous" (From Death to Life [1995] 160). Against this argument, Chesnutt especially mentions Jeremias (Infant Baptism, 1962). Regarding sacrifices, Philo deals with the right attitude towards them. Here, as he does with circumcision, Philo approaches sacrifices both from the external side of the rite and from its inner side (*Spec.* 1.277; *Mos.* 2.107-8).

[16] The four reasons offered are that circumcision prevents a painful disease (*Spec.* 1.4), cleanses the body (*Spec.* 1.5), resembles the circumcision of the heart (*Spec.* 1.6) and makes the nations that practice it the most prolific ones (*Spec.* 1.7).

[17] The symbolic interpretation of circumcision is twofold for it both signals, on the one hand, the rejection of misleading pleasures (*Spec.* 1.9) and, on the other hand, man's true knowing of himself before God (*Spec.* 1.10).

[18] *Spec.* 1.11.

[19] Aware of the fact that Philo speaks of two kinds of circumcision, the physical and that of the heart, as seen above, and the social implications that could be derived from it, there is a need for at least a brief comment. Such a distinction in circumcision would allow for a relaxation of the demand for the physical and an emphasis on the inner circumcision, which, in turn, would lessen the social conflict of the convert in a Diaspora setting. This argument, together with the fact that there is no mention in Philo of any case of a convert going through the circumcision ceremony should not make one conclude that he did not regard circumcision as an unavoidable demand for a convert. The emphasis should be placed on his interest on a true and inner and not just outer conversion to the faith of Israel. Thus it is a question of interrelated and interdependent terms, not of alternative ones.

"an object of ridicule [γελωμένου] among many people".[20] Nonetheless, he says that although the Egyptians practiced it, they were "a race regarded as pre-eminent for its populousness [πολυανθρωπότατον], its antiquity and its attachment to philosophy [φιλοσοφώτατον]".[21]

No less demanding were the requirements placed on those Jews who felt compelled by the demands for a strict relationship to God. Such a relationship manifested itself in a more rigorous attention to the Torah and a way of life like that of the Essenes, or in an ascetic life of contemplation in search of piety like that of the Therapeutae. The social exploration of those demands is an important concern here.

Philo exposes love of piety and the service of God as the highest goals to be pursued by anyone. From that aim, nothing should distract him or her, not even family ties, community-membership, or possessions. This position gave rise to some of the objections on the side of the Gentile constituency, since the convert would often become an alien even among those who until that very moment were his own people and community. The proselyte

> has turned his kinsfolk, who in the ordinary course of things would be his sole confederates, into mortal enemies, by coming as a pilgrim to truth and the honouring of One who alone is worthy of honour, and by leaving the mythical

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[20] *Spec.*1.1

[21] *Spec.* 1.2. It is only for the sake of the argument that Philo's positive reference to Egypt here can be explained. As it has been mentioned above, in order to justify Israel's being regarded as a superior nation to the rest, Egypt becomes the example of all the characteristics Philo despises.

> fables and multiplicity of sovereigns, so highly honoured by the parents and grand-parents and ancestors and blood relations of this immigrant to a better home.[22]

The first social effect of such a decision was, at least, twofold. On the one hand, the resolution of the proselyte paved the way for his own isolation. Although he became "a pilgrim to truth" (μεταναστὰς εἰς ἀλήθειαν), which should open the doors to a new social reality, he continued to be singled out as an "incomer"(ἐπήλυτος).[23] But most important, he became a "mortal enemy" to his own people, who should be understood as his equals by race, language, culture. On the other hand, he renounced another important set of social identity marks - those passed from generation to generation which defined the proselyte's belonging and identity. He almost becomes an outsider.

1.2.2.1 Family and Community

The outward extent of the new allegiance to God is not merely the concern of the individual on how to follow or worship the God of Israel. The scope of this relationship with the divine surpasses the realm of the private and reaches out to family ties. For example, as has been shown above, the social impact of the proselyte's decision affects not only his own identity and social belonging but

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[22] *Spec.* 4.178.

[23] This is Philo's own term (*Virt.* 102-4), and although he does not use this term in a pejorative way, it can be inferred that proselytes remained as strangers among Jewish people. Philo refers to Moses and his recommendation on how to treat proselytes (*Spec.* 1. 51-52), after which came some warnings on some situations to avoid before them. Although the warnings show consideration towards proselytes they presume the noticeable existing distinctions on the basis of birth and education. If the proselytes were Egyptians "they must not be spurned with an unconditional refusal as a children of enemies, but be so far favoured that the third generation is invited to the congregation" (*Virt.* 106-8).

that of his household too. Beyond this, Philo tells how family members should surrender any attempt to interfere with the "one tie of affinity, one accepted sign of goodwill, namely the willingness to serve God and that our every word and deed promotes the cause of piety" (ἔστω γὰρ ἡμῖν μία οἰκειότης καὶ φιλίας ἓν σύμβολον ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ἀρέσκεια καὶ τὸ πάντα λέγειν τε καὶ πράττειν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας).[24] It is a blunt affirmation of how, according to Philo's opinion, the demands on the convert created a new criterion by which to evaluate family ties. The convert should not necessarily envisage a dismissal of such ties, which were held in high regard in Judaism, but their contingent value before those with God. However, Philo asserts that the prospective convert must be ready to abandon his family if they become an impediment to his conviction.[25]

Most of the references that Philo provides to those who follow the path of piety are connected with the subordination of family ties for the higher good. This is not insignificant, bearing in mind the essential place of the family in Judaism and the view of descendants as a blessing from God. Anything damaging such blood ties was considered a terrible adversity or a curse. And thus, Abraham is portrayed as a model proselyte who left "his native country, his race and paternal home" (καταλείπει μὲν πατρίδα καὶ γενεὰν καὶ πατρῷον οἶκον)[26] in what Philo

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[24] *Spec.* 1.317.

[25] All family ties are implied here when Philo remarks that "these kinships, as we call them, which have come down from our ancestors and are based on blood-relationships, or those derived from inter-marriage or other similar causes, let them all be cast aside if they do not seek earnestly the same goal, namely, the honour of God, which is the indissoluble bond of all the affection which makes us one" *Spec.* 1.317.

[26] *Virt.* 214; cf. *Abr.* 62-3, 67.

presents as the starting point of a drastic and all-embracing demand whose first claim was the total departure "from all those of his blood" (τῶν ἀφ' αἵματος ἁπάντων).[27] In one of the very few references in Philo on the effect of a decision of such magnitude there is the strong rhetorical appeal of the "charms of one's relations and one's country" to decide otherwise. A more vivid example of Abraham's total submission to God at the expense of his own family is his obedience to God's demand to sacrifice his "only and dearly cherished son" (ἀγαπητὸς καὶ μόνος) Isaac.[28] It does not mean, however, that for Philo the high demand of Judaism as to even renouncing family ties for the sake of obedience to the one God reflects a bias against family ties. The point is not a universal requirement to withdraw from the family *per se*, but only in as much as it becomes an interference or impediment to the "one tie of affinity" (μία οἰκειότης) mentioned above.[29] Nothing and nobody should stand between the individual and God, not even family or those social elements that constitute the core of Judaism. Even where the new convert had made such a renunciation, Philo states that the new affiliation is established with God who is "father":[30] "they who do 'what is pleasing' to nature and what is 'good' are sons of God" (υἱοί εἰσι τοῦ θεοῦ)[31] and thus members of a new family. Philo makes a plain reference to the proselytes as those who "have adopted God as the lawful

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[27] *Her.* 277-8.

[28] *Abr.* 167-207.

[29] The invitation is that "even though a brother, or a son, or a daughter, or a wife, or a steward, or a firm friend, or anybody else one seems to be well-intentioned towards one should seek to lead one in a similar course." *Spec.* 1.316. Failing to do so would bring the rejection of family ties by the pious one.

[30] *Mut.* 127.

[31] *Spec.* 1.318; cf. Deut 14:1.

husband and father of the servant-soul" (ἄνδρα καὶ πατέρα)[32] Abraham confesses God as "my kinsfolk, my paternal hearth" (σὺ ἡ συγγένεια, σὺ ἡ πατρῴα ἑστία).[33]

Philo's discussion of the question of family ties among Essenes does not clarify what happens with existing family ties after one becomes a member of the group. He only says that the decision to become an Essene is limited to "full grown [men] and already verging on old age"(τέλειοι δ' ἄνδρες καὶ πρὸς γῆρας ἀποκλίνοντες ἤδη)[34] and that it is beyond the scope of family interference in the sense that it is not "based on birth, for birth is not a descriptive mark of voluntary association" (οὐ γένει-γένος γὰρ ἐφ' ἑκουσίοις οὐ γράφεται).[35] Then, the socially accepted family pattern changes completely. It is not that the candidate is to dismiss family relationships henceforth if joining the Essene community: rather, they are reconceived. Family is a question no more of blood affinity but of sharing a common piety. In the *Hypothetica*, Philo refers to the Essenes' negative approach to marriage "because a wife is a selfish creature, excessively jealous and an adept at beguiling the morals of her husband and seducing him by her continued impostures".[36] They "eschew marriage because they clearly discern it to be the sole or the principal danger to the maintenance of the communal life, as

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[32] *Somn.* 2.273.

[33] *Her.* 27.

[34] *Hypoth.* 11.3. One important reason for that is due to their high regard for freedom, so that they are "no longer carried under by the tide of the body nor led by the passions".

[35] *Hypoth.* 11.2.

[36] *Hypoth.* 11.14.

well as because they particularly practice continence".[37] A clear social implication of all this is that women are not accepted in the community. Although the new community becomes a new family setting for the Essenes[38], the desire for holiness requires the sacrifice of one of the common elements of family existence, namely procreation.[39] But once again the care and love provided by the rest of the community members makes the ageing Essene feel a warmth which could not be "enforced by nature" (φύσεως ἀναγκη).[40] One other important aspect to be considered by the candidate is the fact that his decision to join the Essene group according to Philo's portrayal would also affect the physical location of where he lives if residing in a city. Philo locates the Essene communities in villages, far from the cities in which the people show a persistent wickedness.[41] Consequently, the decision implied considering a total departure from any kind of social references and acquaintances.

In his dealing with the Therapeutae,[42] Philo characterises them as having left behind "their brothers, their children, their wives, their parents, the wide circle of their kinsfolk, the groups of friends around them, the fatherlands in which they

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[37] *Hypoth.* 11.14.

[38] A caring (*Hypoth.* 11.13; *Prob.* 87) community (*Prob.* 86) of equals (*Prob.* 79).

[39] Both wives and children are seen negatively as a way of slavery thus harming their freedom. *Hypoth.* 11.17.

[40] *Hypoth.* 11.13.

[41] *Prob.* 76.

[42] "Those who have embraced the life of contemplation"; named so "either in the sense of 'cure' because the profess an art of healing better than that current in the cities which cures only the bodies, while theirs treats also souls... or else in the sense of 'worship,' because nature and the sacred laws have schooled them to worship the Self-existent" (*Contempl.* 1-2).

were born and reared, since strong is the attraction of familiarity and very great its power to ensnare".[43] Far from any family, community, and society references and ties, their lives are confronted with a new kind of community which is intended to supply the previously existing one. However, the new understanding of "community" of the Therapeutae does not merely call for a smooth transition from one community to another of similar features but with different members. The changes are radical. Arising out of a negative understanding of life in the city, the invitation is to live in solitary places in isolation from people with "dissimilar character" (ἐκ τῶν ἀνομοίων).[44] The new community draws apart from cities[45], and each individual has their own simple house, far from other members' houses to preserve their solitude, but close enough to maintain their fellowship with one another and to assist or be assisted in case of need, for example, sickness.[46] The Therapeutae only meet all together on the seventh day of the week for a community gathering.[47]

According to Philo's account, the Therapeutae have women participating in their assemblies, given that women show "the same ardour and the same sense of their calling".[48] However, men and women are separated from each other by a wall in

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[43] *Comtempl.* 18.

[44] *Comtempl.* 19-20.

[45] For the Therapeutae even the best of the cities was "full of turmoils and disturbances, innumerable which no one could endure who has ever been even once under the guidance of wisdom" (*Comtempl.* 19).

[46] *Comtempl.* 24.

[47] *Comtempl.* 30.

[48] *Comtempl.* 32.

the assembly and seated in different places for the common meal.[49] Community replaces family, so they do not marry, and chastity is presented as a virtue.[50] With no children, the continuity of the group is not dependent on procreation but on adhesion. Philo presents the youngest members of the community as nonetheless not missing their natural family ties for their seniors are judged "to be the parents of them all in common, in a closer affinity than blood, since to the right minded there is no closer tie than noble living".[51]

It is important to notice that, according to Philo's description, other ordinary social elements are altered in the community of the Therapeutae. For instance they do not have slaves since they see slavery as against nature (παρὰ φύσιν)[52] and although the community roles of the member maintain greater respect for the elders than for the younger ones, the criteria is not biological age but time in the community and philosophical learning. Thus, it is possible that members younger in age are given pre-eminence over members older in age

> since by senior they do not understand the aged and grey headed who are regarded as still mere children if they have only in late years come to love this rule of life, but those who from their earliest years have grown to manhood and spent their prime in pursuing the contemplative branch of philosophy.[53]

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[49]*Comtempl.* 30-33.

[50]*Comtempl.* 68.

[51] *Comtempl.* 72.

[52] *Comtempl.* 70.

[53]*Comtempl.* 67.

The change in content of the terms "children" and "senior" shows not only in their seating arrangements but also in the fact that the young members of the community (again, not necessarily in biological terms) serve the old ones. Thus Philo portrays the Therapeutae as giving a new understanding and content to family and community roles and status, something the prospective convert had to resolve.

1.2.2.2 Possessions

The results of the new allegiance described by Philo so far have another dimension, which relates to the possessions of the converts and the new attitude to them after conversion. The general attitude was one of detachment from material possessions for the sake of a higher good. The two most notable descriptions we have from Philo are those of the Essene community and the Therapeutae. There are some other scattered references relating to proselytes and their attitude to material possessions, some of them already implied in the case of Abraham seen earlier, whose original land and family bonds and wealthy position were left behind to follow the path of piety.

In Philo's account of the Essenes they are depicted as those who did not give their property away, but "they put everything together into the public stock and enjoy the benefit of them all in common".[54] The sense of community was such

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[54] *Hypoth.* 11.4.

that they did not consider the private house as individual but as belonging to all. Even more, "they all have a single treasury and common disbursements; their clothes are held in common and also their food through their institution of public meals.[55] Whatever they earned in their jobs was given to the community manager.[56] They all seem to come, according to Philo, from a low social stratum, working for their common livelihood and caring and providing for the sick who were unable to contribute to the support of the community.[57] Such an attitude towards possessions validated not only their strong sense of community and solidarity but also the defiance of one of the existing social values, namely social status, since property was one of the means determining status. In Philo's view, the Essenes challenged and rejected such a view and personal value system by considering each other as equals.

On the other hand, those becoming members of the spiritual family of the Therapeutae showed their "longing for the deathless and blessed life" (ἀθανάτου καὶ μακαρίας ζωῆς) by abandoning all their material possessions to the family they left behind. Even if they did not have any relatives to endow with their possessions, they left them to someone else, to those "still blind in mind" (τὰς διανοίας τυφλώττουσιν) so that they could acquire "the wealth that has eyes to see" (τὸν βλέποντα πλοῦτον).[58] This attitude gave the decision a definitive

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[55] *Prob.* 85-6.

[56] *Hypoth.* 11.10.

[57] *Prob.* 76-87.

[58] *Comtempl.* 13.

character in the sense that there was nothing to go back to. Moreover the strict discipline and asceticism of the Therapeutae in social relationships and possessions was matched by an austere *modus vivendi*, with great restrictions on their own eating[59] and clothing.[60] So, "the abandonment of property ties and the subordination of family ties are part of the rhetoric of Philo's argument for the pursuit of piety through a life of contemplation."[61]

1.2.3 Summary

As shown above, Philo pictures a set of situations in which different individuals and peoples manifested their way of discerning and showing their allegiance to God. Those coming from Gentile stock to faith in the One God of Judaism saw their lives as at a difficult middle point, rejected by those they left behind for the sake of the new faith while fully accepted by the new community. They were not required to leave anything beforehand, except of course worshipping other deities, but if family, acquaintances, land or possession were to interfere in the final decision they were to be dismissed.

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[59] *Comtempl.* 25, 30, 34-5, 73-4. This is clearly a rhetorical device Philo uses to put a stronger emphasis on and greater exaltation of the goals and moral allegiance of the Therapeutae. Thus, Philo reports that the Therapeutae did not take any food into each of their individual plain houses and individuals did not leave the house six days of the week, until they met on the seventh as a community. Even then, the menu was rather severe: "They eat nothing costly, only common bread with salt for a relish flavoured further by the daintier with hyssop, and their drink is spring water.... Therefore they eat enough to keep from hunger and drink enough to keep from thirst but abhor surfeiting as a malignant enemy both to soul and body" (*Comtempl.* 37).

[60] *Comtempl.* 38.

[61] Barton, Discipleship (1994) 28.

Concerning the Jewish sects, both Essene and Therapeutae are represented by Philo as substituting the new community for their family ties. It has already been noticed that the new spiritual/philosophical relationship provided them with a new though modified family/community setting. There transpired a negative view of the common understanding of family or household as an evil or unfortunate reality of a previous living style. Their approach to possessions departed from the one generally held in society in that possessions were to be treated as common goods (Essenes) or they were to be renounced (Therapeutae). In both cases, the social roles that possessions create were rejected and the only distinction among the members was based on individual piety and experience, which in turn provided a new perspective of authority and power, based on devotion to God. Their meals were communal, without much distinction among the members, except perhaps for places at table (Therapeutae) which differed from the formal and class attachments to table-fellowship. All this added up to what could be called a "society within society".

1.3 FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

1.3.1 Introduction

A Palestinian Jew, born the son of a priest, Josephus (37 – 100 CE) knew very well the religious variety of Judaism from his own experience since he confesses to having decided to "gain personal experience of the several sects into which our

nation is divided. These, as I have frequently mentioned, are three in number – the first that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes".[62] During that same period which lasted three years, he became a disciple of a Banus, an ascetic hermit; finally, he opted for becoming a Pharisee.[63] Thus, Josephus seems to be closely aware of the concrete internal life of the particular groups and in general of the religious life of his time. Nevertheless, it is in speaking of the Essenes that Josephus gives a more detailed summary of what it meant to become a member of this community.

As has been mentioned in the general introduction to this section, the writings of Josephus evidence the apologetic intention of their author. In McKnight's words, "Josephus wrote with an agenda, whether to glorify Israel's religion, to curry favor with Rome, to encourage Jews to respect Rome, or to exonerate himself as a reliable historian".[64] In his study of Josephus' portrait of Solomon, Feldman affirms that the *Antiquities* are addressed to an audience in the Greek speaking world, and that the description of Solomon strongly denotes apologetic emphasis.[65] In her monograph study on Josephus, Rajak indicates that in Josephus' work there is, on the one hand, the information provided about the different episodes, and, on the other hand, the distortion in the narration of the

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[62] *Vita* 10.

[63] *Vita* 12.

[64] McKnight, Light (1991) 70.

[65] Feldmann, "Josephus as an Apologist," (1976) 69-98. For example, Josephus emphasises Solomon's piety towards his parents, sense of gratitude, faith in God, modesty, so that Solomon is "the most illustrious of all kings and most beloved by God, and in understanding and wealth surpassed those who had ruled over the Hebrews before him". See, *A.J.* 8.190.

incidents related.[66] As an example, there is the question of how disinterested Josephus' portrait of the emperors could be, when they were his patrons or benefactors.[67] In a similar way, Goodman acknowledges the co-existing biases that run through his writings. On the one hand, there is his pro-Roman attitude as a Roman citizen and, on the other hand, his Jewish commitment as a Jew himself.[68]

Having said all this about the conditioning factors behind Josephus' writings, the actual consensus is that the accounts are "essentially reliable but with not uncommon embellishments"[69] and therefore any attempt to deem them as "fraudulent" should be avoided.[70]

1.3.2. Social Requirements and Consequences of Conversion

A necessary step towards full membership to the Jewish faith was circumcision.[71] As related in the story of king Izates[72] king of Adiabene, he is instructed on the law and keeps it with the exception of circumcision, for it would create rejection from his subjects since these are foreign customs.[73] However, Josephus seems to

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[66] Rajak, Josephus (1983) 4.

[67] Rajak, Josephus (1983) 6.

[68] Goodman, "Josephus," (1999) 45-58.

[69] McKnight, Light (1991) 143 n. 99.

[70] Goodman, "Josephus," (1999) 54.

[71] *B.J.* 2.454; *A.J.* 20.139, 145-6.

[72] *A.J.* 20.17-53.

[73] *A.J.* 20.34-45.

leave the door open in the same text to avoid circumcision if "constrained by necessity", since worship of God "counted more than circumcision".[74] Although this example should imply a certain tolerance towards Gentiles, exogamous marriages were generally forbidden.[75] It is in Josephus' more apologetic work Against Apion that some exceptions to this rule are found, on the basis of observance of the Law.[76] But it has already been argued that these were more Josephus' ideas than those of the masses, and sometimes only apologetic devices.

Turning to the most ample presentation in Josephus' work on conversion, he states that any candidate for membership in the Essene community is required to undergo a one-year probation period to show his "temperance" (ἐγκράτεια) and then two more years to prove his "endurance" (καρτέρησις) and then he becomes a member of the sect. The concrete requirements are twofold. On the one hand, he has to learn from the community members' own example, which implies more of an emphasis on experience and attitude as a criterion than any other society imposes.[77] On the other hand, he has to show that he has acquired satisfactory attitudes that according to Josephus' report are as detailed as following:

> First that he will practice piety towards the Deity, next that he will observe justice towards men: that he will wrong none whether of his own mind or under another's orders; that he will for ever hate the unjust and fight the battle of the just; that he will for ever keep faith with all men, especially with the powers that be, since no ruler attains his office save by the will of God; that, should he himself bear rule, he will never abuse his authority nor, either in dress or by other outward marks of

[74] *A.J.* 20.41.

[75] *A.J.* 11.71, 139-53; 12.187-9; 18.345-7.

[76] *C. Ap.* 2.209-210

[77] *B.J.* 2.138.

> superiority, outshine his subjects; to be for ever a lover of truth and to expose liars; to keep his hands from stealing and his soul pure from unholy gain; to conceal nothing from the members of the sect and to report none of their secrets to others, even though tortured to death. He swears, moreover, to transmit their rules exactly as he himself received them; to abstain from robbery; and in like manner carefully to preserve the books of the sect and the names of the angels. Such are the oaths by which they secure their proselytes.[78]

The required attitudes of the prospective candidate are described in social terms or relationships. First, there is to be piety, which referred to his relationship to God but also to other men, mainly the righteous ones and those in authority. Second he must love truth, over against those who do not. Thirdly, secrecy is required about the community beliefs at the price of his own life, clearly emphasising the importance given to the existing boundaries between those inside and outside the community. Finally, there is an underlying idea that runs through the whole text that could be called moral uprightness, which is defined in terms of a given attitude towards others ("not [to] do harm to any one"; not to "abuse his authority"; not to "endeavor to outshine his subjects"; "hands clear of theft, and his soul from unlawful gains"; "abstain from robbery"). It is important to highlight the intention behind these oaths, which was the total surrender of the convert's life to God through membership in the community, which also implied a given way of life.

It is interesting to notice how Josephus, when mentioning the "three philosophical sects among Jews" (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes),

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[78] *B.J.* 2.139-42.

emphasises the fact that only the Essenes are "of Jewish birth" (Ἰουδαῖοι μὲν γένος ὄντες).[79] Such an emphasis implies that no Gentile would be accepted as a member of the Essene community, not even a Jewish proselyte. Thus there is a solid ethnic emphasis in the community, which would rule out from the very beginning any attempt from a Jewish proselyte to become an Essene.

1.3.2.1. Family and Community

Besides the initiation procedures, Josephus mentions that one of the highest requirements for converts to the Essene sect (which would make them consider how demanding and important the decision would be) is that of renouncing family relationships for the sake of their dedication to what they consider a higher type of association. The new community becomes the desired substitute of family and the relationship is based on mutual care.[80] Reference is also made to the way they make "community", which is portrayed as being exemplary, based on their commitment to each other's well being and care.

Josephus boasts of the Essenes' virtues and plainly affirms that "they neglect wedlock" (καὶ γάμου μὲν παρ' αὐτοις ὑπεροψία) as if they would consider it an occasion for losing or causing to lose virtue.[81] Their approach to parenthood is not a natural one but based on the selection of somebody else's children, if

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[79] *B.J.* 2.119.

[80] *A.J.* 18.21.

[81] *B.J.* 2.120.

"pliable and fit for learning" (ἁπαλοὺς ἐπί), although they consider them from the moment of their adoption as of their own family and educate them according to their worldview.[82] According to Josephus, there is an acknowledged rejection of marriage by the Essenes but not in absolute terms as in Philo's account. However, there is a warning against "women's wantonness" (τῶν γυναικῶν ἀσελγείας), since the Essenes are "persuaded that none of them preserve their fidelity to one man".[83] Josephus gives the impression that those Essenes who do marry do it more for the sake of procreation of the race than for a clear conviction about the relationship. However, Josephus tells us about "another order of Essenes" which complies with all the elements common amongst Essenes but one - their attitude towards marriage. It is not that this order has a more positive view on matrimony, but they acknowledge its necessity for the sake of "succession".[84] Hence, women have a three years probationary period in which, based on external evidences, they show they are capable of bearing children, and thus they could marry. After a child is conceived, the husband avoids his wife's company to show their marriage is strictly for the sake of procreation.[85] The underlying idea towards rejecting matrimony is that it is a deterrent to their exercise of piety.[86]

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[82] *B.J.* 2.120.

[83] *B.J.* 2.121.

[84] *B.J.* 2.160.

[85] *B.J.* 2.161.

[86] Josephus actually speaks of avoiding marriage to avoid negative situations provoked by "domestic quarrels" (*A.J.* 18.21).

In Josephus' evidence for the Essenes, an important element in Essene attitudes that brings about a serious rupture from the very religiously oriented society of their time is that they would not offer their sacrifices in the Temple. The consequence of this would be a denial of access to it.[87] This would be a primary issue to think about for any one considering association with Essenes, since the Temple was a holy place for Jewish people and a sign of unity and identity.

Concerning internal community matters, there seems to be also a strong sense of equality among the members that affects their economic and social status. For instance, no-one is allowed to distinguish himself from another member of the community on the basis of his own wealth but has to make his riches part of the common good.[88] This new reality would be attractive to those socially neglected but would be viewed with caution by those whose new situation would imply a loss of status, power and influence.

1.3.2.2. Possessions

Continuing with the study of Josephus' report on the Essenes, the next step is the consideration of his depiction of possessions in relation to conversion. It is noteworthy that in Josephus' account there is no idea of individual private property but only of that of the community. This is so evident that there is no

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[87] *A.J.* 18.19.

[88] *A.J.* 18.20.

apparent distinction even in the outlook of the community "brothers" (ἀδελφοί).[89] Josephus portrays them as living in a very simple way not caring much for external appearance so that they wear their clothing until it is fit to be thrown away. No one makes profit out of the need of a fellow member but provides from what he might have to meet his need.[90] Many social values, Josephus argues, are not just reversed but completely denied and substituted for those of the community.

Other connected issues that relate to Josephus' account of the Essenes' use of possessions are the following. Hospitality was very important and they would receive any visiting member of another Essene community as if they had known him for a long time, enabling him to benefit from the community's possessions since he would be travelling without any possession.[91] The spiritual motivations of their way of life also showed in their meals, which were the same for all, eaten together after observance of purity and prayer rituals.[92] They were free to practise charity but were prevented from benefiting their families without the consent of someone responsible in the community.[93]

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[89] *A.J.* 17.20; *B.J.* 2.122.

[90] *B.J.* 2.124-7.

[91] *B.J.* 2.124-5.

[92] *B.J.* 2.129-33; *A.J.* 18.22.

[93] *B.J.* 2.134.

1.3.3. Summary

The diverse testimony from Josephus on accounts of conversion necessitates a general recapitulation. First of all, Josephus' propagandistic attitude is at work in his exaltation of the Jewish people and in the attestation of those Gentiles admiring and influenced by the Law. Beyond this exaltation of Jews, he discusses also their attitude towards proselytism. Josephus shows a tolerant and open position towards proselytes by not making circumcision compulsory but a matter of the individual conscience, differing from the majority Jewish tendency.

Josephus' report on the Essenes provides a vast case study on how becoming a proselyte affected one's social reality. It can be concluded that converts subordinated in some cases or more often renounced family ties entirely in order to pursue a higher good, i.e., God and obedience to Him. Rejecting the right to their particular possessions and making them available to the community became both a means of community equality, care and charity, and an attestation that the new community filled the gap left by leaving the family behind. Finally, in the endeavour for piety, purity and righteousness, Josephus depicts the Essenes as ready to detach themselves from sacrificing in the temple with the certain risk of being expelled from it and finding themselves beyond an essential Jewish community identity mark.

1.4 QUMRAN

1.4.1 Introduction

The current state of the debate on the Qumran community is far from conclusive. Basic issues such as who the members of the community were are still in the front line of the discussion. Whether these people were, for instance Essenes or not, or whether they were a monastic branch of the sect, is far beyond the scope of the present work.[94] Thus, the procedure will be on the more secure boundaries of those texts ascribed to the existing religious community gathering at the area known as "The Dead Sea" at the current time. However, another difficulty accompanying main texts ascribed to that community should be acknowledged since the "Community Rule" (1QS) and the "Covenant of Damascus" (CD) differ in many relevant aspects. The former "speaks for the monastic group" and the latter "speaks for the town-dwelling group".[95] The focus, therefore, will be on the "monastic group" and thus the "Community Rule", especially 1QS5-6, and related documents. From this text relevant evidence will be extracted to draw a basic picture of what it meant to become a member of the community and how it affected the social reality of the potential convert.

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[94] In his introductory book on the Dead Sea Scrolls, VanderKam includes a section on whether the Qumran group was an Essene community, dealing with arguments in favour of and against that possibility (Dead Sea Scrolls Today [1994] 71-98). He also gives some treatment to other theories, like for instance, Schiffman's Sadducees hypothesis ("New Halakhic Letter," [1990] 64-73).

[95] Sanders, Judaism (1992) 342.

1.4.2 Social Requirements and Consequences of Conversion

The first and most evident demand on any one interested in this community was implicitly provided by the place it was located in. The desert would be a clear stance for detachment from a society understood as having a sinful way of living.[96] Admittance to the community would not happen at once. The candidate would have to go through a laborious process that took two years (examined by the Congregation or the Many [הרבים],[97] periods of teaching, restrictions from community meals and community possessions; etc), having been previously tested by the Instructor or Guardian on his suitability for the Community and its goals.[98] A rigid observation of the Torah and of many purity rules was demanded from any convert.

The *Community Rule* text affirms that it is for those who "volunteer to convert from all evil" (היחד המתנדבים לשוב מכול רע)[99] It shows that the possibilities for entrance into the community would depend on the aptitudes, deeds, and intentions of the candidate but, besides that, there is the decisive element of the *divine fate* of the individual. Accordingly, a person became a "son of light" (בני אור) depending on whether he had received from God more parts of light (אור) than of darkness (חשך).[100] It was the task of the Inspector and the

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[96] 1QS 5.1-7, 8.12-6; 4QMMT 92-96.

[97] Vermes uses "the Congregation" and García Martínez "the Many".

[98] 1QS 6.13-23.

[99] 1QS 5.1

[100] 1QS 3.20-6.

Congregation to find out how many parts of light and darkness there were in the candidate. The fact that the community constituency was only male would also affect the newcomer in the matter of any existing family duties.

1.4.2.1 Family and Community

The Qumran sect was a community dedicated to holiness. As has already been shown, they withdrew from society since they could not see how they might share their lives with so many unlawful people. As García Martínez states it:

> when it is divine precepts which are in question, peaceful co-existence is impossible. If the city is unclean through the faults of its inhabitants, to remain in it is to be contaminated. If the temple is profaned, if the festivals are celebrated out of season, if the sacrifices have been made unclean, there is no sense in taking part in worship. And if, in spite of the zeal displayed, they do not have the means to restore order and impose observance, all that remains is to maintain the purity of the remnant by withdrawing and waiting for the moment when divine intervention allows restoration of the order which has been destroyed.[101]

Such a self-understanding, over against larger society, which they perceived as having departed from a proper observance of the law, estranged the Qumran people from their fellow citizens. Thus, a departure of the convert from his social reality and relatives was a consequence of his decision for membership. This distancing of oneself from the establishment would add what certainly would be difficult step for a Jew, i.e., to cease worshipping and sacrificing in the Temple, the great identity mark of Judaism, because of the community emphasis on purity. Anyone considering membership of the Qumran sect would certainly find

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[101] García Martínez, People (1995) 33.

it a heavy cost to contemplate. The alternative was the community itself as the "temporary substitute for the temple".[102]

Another factor in the process of detachment from those in the wider society, considered by the Qumran community as sinners, was the command to avoid any sort of contact with them. This command was put into practice by rejecting any sort of relationship with those sinners, not working with them or associating with their possessions.[103] If food or any other thing were to be taken from them, it would only be for a price.[104] Their position went as far as rejecting any authority emanating from those whom they reckoned as sinners.[105] All this amounted to a practical disaffection for the society they so far belonged into, a significant consideration for the prospective candidate to the community.

Although people of that time and setting should be understood not so much in modern individualistic and "self" terms but rather in terms of relationships such as family, household and community, the demand for the total surrender of the will to that of the community would make a definite impact on the candidate. It was not only a matter of giving the communities all their possessions.[106] It was

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[102] Sanders, Judaism (1992) 362.

[103] 1QS5.14.

[104] 1QS5.16. the implication is certainly to avoid being in debt with sinners or having a patron-client relationship with them

[105] 1QS5.16.

[106] They would even be punished if it was discovered that this was not so (1QS 6.45).

also a question of giving up one's own will to accept that of the priests and the community at large.[107] In fact, as part of the initiation process, the candidate still did not fully become part of the community until after a two-year probation period, during which they gradually obtained certain community rights.[108] However, this seemingly community class system was open to changes, for members of the community were tested on a yearly basis, leaving the door open to rank alteration.[109] Furthermore, meals were communal[110] and members were compelled to accept mutual correction.[111]

Another element with social repercussions to be considered by the potential candidate was celibacy. This is not a simple issue, for there is no single reference in 1QS to women, marriage, family, or celibacy.[112] It is not possible to infer the existence of a celibate community from the *Community Rule* text itself, but it is feasible from a combined study of this together with the *Damascus Document*

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[107] 1QS 5.1-3. The members of the community were ranked according to their deeds and insights. Those of a lower rank had to obey those of a higher one (1QS5.20-3), and this kind of community stratification was even represented in the way they sat in the assembly. First came the priests, then the elders, and finally the rest of the community in descending order (1QS6.8-9).

[108] During the first year, the candidate was taught the precepts of the community and his duties (1QS6.15-6). He did not share the purified foods and the possessions of the community (1QS6.16-7), which implied that he would have to live on his own resources. After that first year was completed, the candidate was questioned about his deeds and insights and duties, and if he was successful, he would be admitted into the community and his possessions would go to the community bursar, although they would still not be used by the community (1QS6.19-20). The candidate was not yet allowed to drink from the drink of the Many until the second year is completed (1QS6.20-1). Then, he was examined again and if finally accepted, he was ranked in the community and able to share in the congregation with his advice and judgement (1QS6.22-3). His possessions, then, were held in common with those of the rest of the community (1QS6.22).

[109] 1QS5.24.

[110] 1QS6.2.

[111] 1QS5.24-5.

[112] VanderKam, Dead Sea Scrolls Today (1994) 90-1.

and Josephus. Starting with Josephus, it has been already shown above in the study of conversion in his writings that he speaks of two orders of Essenes, one practising celibacy and the other marrying for the sake of procreation.[113] If that account corresponds with an actual historical circumstance, it could be argued that the *Damascus Document* could reflect the circumstances of the marrying Essene group, whilst those practising celibacy would then be, virtually by "elimination", the ones under the *Community Rule*.[114]

Following this line of argument, on the assumption that the Dead Sea community behind the *Community Rule* text was a celibate one, the candidate for this community would have to take an oath of celibacy. This is understood, first as:

> a means of preserving their ritual purity (Lev.15) as a priestly community dedicated to a life of perpetual worship in God's true, spiritual temple. Second, it expressed their eschatological self-understanding as consecrated warriors engaged with the 'angels of light' in a holy war against the forces of darkness. Third, it was an integral aspect of their quest for esoteric knowledge and prophetic insight through a life of sexual renunciation and the subjugation of natural drives.[115]

Two implications can be drawn from Barton's words on celibacy in this Essene community at the time. A first has to do with a given attitude towards women, who therefore were rejected as community members. Sexual intercourse was viewed as a cause of uncleanness, and thus it was a contingency to be avoided so

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[113] In reference to the Essene group rejecting marriage, see, *B.J.* 2.120. For the other Essene order accepting marriage for the sake of procreation, see, *B.J.* 2.160.

[114] There is the issue of some tombs found near the Qumran community in which the remains of both women and children have been discovered. Whether they are the bodies of visitors to the community, travellers passing by, or actual members of the community at a time when celibacy was not practised remains uncertain.

[115] Barton, Discipleship (1994) 45.

as to avoid impurity. Marriage, then, was to be rejected. The clear consequences of this position were a rupture with the socially accepted family and household patterns and identity marks besides a rejection of procreation, which was, in the wider society considered a blessing from God. Secondly, there was a use of language, which created a set of polar opposites. The community was to live in "God's true, spiritual temple, (...) engaged with the 'angels of light'" which in this context implied an undermining and underestimation of the natural and physical realms. In such a context, women were represented as the natural means to subdue men's desire for purity.

1.4.2.2 Possessions

Besides social considerations in terms of family relationships and societal affiliations, the prospective candidate was also confronted with a different understanding of wealth to that held in society at large. As has already been outlined above in the description of the entry process, the candidate was required to bring his possessions to the community, so that whenever he was successfully accepted he no longer had a claim on those possessions for they became those of the community.[116] The complementary effect of this apparent loss of wealth was the fact that the community provided for the well being of each of its members.

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[116] 1QS6.22.

In the event of a member of the community's lying about his possessions, that is, hiding some goods and thus depriving the community from their usufruct, he would be excluded "from the pure food of the Many for a year and shall be sentenced to a quarter of his bread".[117] This was one more instance in which the practise of the community of goods was emphasised instead of private property or accumulating wealth. The financial consequences of conversion would certainly affect differently the wealthy and the poor. The former might look at it with some suspicion, for a positive decision in favour of entering the community would mean a loss not only in financial terms but also in terms of status, whilst the latter would perhaps find it attractive in a society with limited economic resources.

1.4.3 Summary

The community in Qumran represented one of the most relevant cases of what conversion implied, at least from the angle of its social requirements and consequences, which are the focus of the present study. The abandonment of family, society, the religious establishment, possessions and private opinion in favour of fulfilling the law and its precepts according to the community norms has been noted. A demanding observance of the Torah and purity rules became the purpose of the Dead Sea community members for which they sacrificed, according to the *Community Rule*, everything. Such was the social requirement

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[117] 1QS6.24-5.

that a prospective candidate to the community had to consider as part of the decision making process.

1.5 JOSEPH AND ASENETH

1.5.1 Introduction

The anonymous work *Joseph and Aseneth*[118] narrates the conversion of Aseneth from the many gods of the Egyptians to the one God of Joseph. There is much uncertainty about the date of the text, although the consensus is moving towards a date "between c.100 BCE and 115 CE".[119] Likewise, there is agreement on the genre as a Hellenistic romance, originally written in Greek.[120] Furthermore, most scholars argue in favour of a Jewish authorship[121] although there are still those who defend it as a Christian work.[122] There are also those who argue for Christian interpolations or revisions in the originally Jewish text.[123]

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[118] There are different recensions of the text. For a recent summary of the positions, see, Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 65-9. We are using the short recension translated by David Cook in Sparks' Apocryphal Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, 465-503 is used here. The basis of this recension, based on Philonenko's French translation, is the text critical premise, *lectio brevior potior.*

[119] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 80-5. Also, Bohak, Joseph and Aseneth (1996); Díez, "José y Asenet," (1984) 214; Delling, "Einwirkungen," (1978) 29-56; Burchard, Untersuchungen (1965) 144-6.

[120] *Contra* Riessler, ("Joseph und Aseneth," [1922] 1-3) who argues for a Hebrew original on the basis of the many Semitic expressions which can be justified from the influence and use of the Septuagint and Jewish traditions.

[121] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 71-76; Collins, Between Athens and Jerusalem (1983) 89-91; Charlesworth, Pseudepigrapha (1981) 291-2; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 158-63; Philonenko, Joseph et Aséneth (1968) 101; Duchesne, "Review," (1889) 461-6.

[122] Cook, "Joseph and Aseneth," (1984) 469; James, "Asenath," (1898) 162; Batiffol, Prière d'Aseneth (1889-90) 23-4.

[123] Holtz, Christliche Interpolationen (1967-8) 482-97; Batiffol, Prière d'Aseneth (1889-90) 18-29. *Contra*, Philonenko, Joseph et Aséneth (1968) 99-109; Burchard, Untersuchungen (1965) 99-107; Kilpatrick, Living Issues (1952) 5-6.

Up to the present there has been little consensus in the discussion on the purpose of *Joseph and Aseneth*, and the constraints of the present work only allow for a presentation of the two main positions. Thus, on the one hand, scholars argue in favour of the missionary or pro-Judaism propagandistic purpose of the work, therefore, intending a Gentile audience.[124] Nickelsburg argues that the story is told from the perspective of Aseneth, "*from the point of view of the proselyte*".[125] He also acknowledges a certain syncretistic flavour, surprising in a work so opposed to idolatry, which could be explained on the basis of a display of motifs in ways intelligible to Gentiles.[126] Feldman finds the emphasis on immortality as "a major attraction to Judaism".[127] On the other hand, other scholars argue that although *Joseph and Aseneth* helps in the understanding of Jewish proselytism during the Second Temple period, the addressees were Jews and the work was written in order to invigorate their beliefs and, consequently, their identity.[128] The arguments are various. McKnight indicates that Joseph does not try to convert or proselytize Aseneth, "he simply happens upon the situation", as was typical elsewhere in Judaism.[129] Chesnutt finds the necessary assumption that Gentile readers were sufficiently familiar with the biblical stories presupposed in Joseph and Aseneth to be "too much".[130] In fact, the very core of the story, namely, the

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[124] Feldman, Jews and Gentiles (1993) 316; Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 262; Philonenko, Joseph et Aséneth (1968) 106-7.

[125] Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 262.

[126] Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 262.

[127] Feldman, Jews and Gentiles (1993) 316.

[128] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 257-62; Goodman, Mission and Conversion (1994) 79; McKnight, Light (1991) 61.

[129] McKnight, Light (1991) 61.

[130] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 257-8.

problem of a Jew's marrying a Gentile was in itself "a problem to the Jewish conscience".[131]

Nonetheless, there is agreement on the story as describing the conversion of Aseneth, a Gentile worshipper of many gods, to a faith in the one God of the Joseph, a Jew. Either to exalt Jewish values to a Jewish readership or to convince Gentiles of the higher virtues of the Jewish faith, this discussion serves the purpose of showing the author's rhetorical attempt to depict a prototypical convert. The social impact of conversion, as it is narrated in *Joseph and Aseneth*, becomes the focus of the following examination.[132]

1.5.2 Social Requirements and Consequences of Conversion

There are different issues at stake in the presentation of Aseneth's conversion experience. Even the apparently prime motive for the conversion is somewhat "unorthodox" because Aseneth's changing from her commitment to the idols of the Egyptian gods to the One God of the Jews results from her falling in love with Joseph. Nonetheless, it is not necessary here to explore her motivations but rather to analyse the author's account of the social effects of such a decision.

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[131] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 258.

[132] The limitation of this slanted approach has to be acknowledged, for conversion carries more implications than those of a social nature. Such a limitation is in the nature of any methodological approach: certain elements only become known or are treated depending on the criteria applied. However, the focus of this analysis is not to present a comprehensive study of conversion in Jewish literary sources like *Joseph and Aseneth*, but of what conversion meant to Luke when looked at through the prism of the socio-religious implications and consequences of such a decision-making process, according to contemporary literary sources.

Given the twofold pattern at work in the present chapter on "Conversion in Judaism", the different social effects and consequences of the conversion to be deduced from *Joseph and Aseneth* will be arranged under the headings "family and community" and "possessions".

1.5.2.1 Family and Community

In the story of Joseph and Aseneth, there are two prototypical communities reflected whose values affect the way the argument develops. On the one hand, there is the view of community represented by Aseneth, with its multiplicity of deities and, on the other hand, the picture of the Jewish community as represented by Joseph, whose members were worshippers of the One God. The way Pentephres, priest of Heliopolis and Aseneth's father, praises the God of Joseph[133] together with his willingness to give his daughter in marriage to Joseph the Jew,[134] portrays the inclusive attitude of Gentile religious cults towards the variety of existing gods, including the god of the Jews. In contrast, there is the attitude of Joseph who refuses both to share table with him, for "this was an abomination for him",[135] and to greet Aseneth with a kiss, because she worships

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[133] *JA* 3.5-6; 4.9.

[134] *JA* 4.10. Aseneth's response is one of outrage for she despises Joseph because his status is lower than hers, for he is of a different race, was a fugitive, sold as a slave, with a mistress, imprisoned, and whose only merit was that he interpreted a dream for Pharaoh. Therefore, she prefers Pharaoh's son (*JA* 4.12-15). However, there is no reference to Joseph's religious allegiance.

[135] *JA* 7.1. The fact that Joseph would not eat with Egyptians should be interpreted as a refusal to share table with anyone who was not a Jew.

idols and eats from their tables.[136] It is only when Aseneth becomes a worshipper of Joseph's God that he receives and kisses her and permits her to kiss him in return.[137]

The issue of table-fellowship as setting community boundaries becomes a relevant issue in *Joseph and Aseneth.* As has already been mentioned above, Joseph refuses to sit at the same table with his Gentile host. He does not kiss Aseneth either because she eats food from the idols' table. In contrast with the food from the idols' table, Joseph is depicted as eating "the blessed bread of life, and drinking the blessed cup of immortality".[138] These are similar terms to those uttered by the heavenly man to Aseneth to confirm that her repentance has been accepted and therefore she "shall eat the bread of life and drink the cup of immortality".[139] When Aseneth blesses the Lord for sending that heavenly man to rescue her from darkness to light,[140] as a way to show her gratitude, she prepares food for him and asks him to eat it if she has found favour with him.[141] In reply, the man offers Aseneth honey to eat after himself, saying that anyone who eats

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[136] *JA* 8.4-5. Joseph says that one who worships God only kisses his mother, sister and wife, because all three bless God with their mouths. About mother and sister Joseph adds a reason of lineage, because they are "of his own tribe and kind", not so of the wife (*JA* 8.6).

[137] *JA* 20.7. Another social emphasis made here by the author of *Joseph and Aseneth* is that Joseph did not sleep with Aseneth until they were married for that would not be the right thing to do for a man who worships God.

[138] *JA* 8.5.

[139] *JA* 15.4. This is certainly a strong rhetorical emphasis to order to contrast the ways of the Gentiles and those of the Jews, for the bread that Gentiles eat is that of "anguish" and the cup they drink is that of treachery (*JA* 8.5).

[140] *JA* 15.13.

[141] *JA* 15.14.

that shall never die.[142] Thus, sharing food is presented as signalling the boundaries between those inside and outside the Jewish community. As Chesnutt has put it, table-fellowship refers "to the entire Jewish way of life in contrast to heathen conduct".[143]

From these two contrasting situations, one in which heathens are presented as having no scruples concerning table-fellowship companions, another in which a Jew refuses to share table with Gentiles because of his beliefs, the author presents Jewish faith in exclusivistic terms regarding association with other religious groups. The boundaries established to define such an association are delimited by the faith of the Jew, which affects the terms of social relationships.

An interesting twist in the story is that Aseneth's parents, who have so far been presented as receptive to both Joseph and his God, now reject her after Aseneth has accepted Joseph's faith. The perception of such a reaction is presented in Aseneth's prayer to God asking for divine deliverance and salvation. Aseneth's parents "denied" her after she had broken the idols of their gods.[144] That is why she calls herself now an "orphan".[145] Thus, the rejection by her parents is not so

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[142] *JA* 16.8-9.

[143] Chesnutt, From Death to life (1995) 178.

[144] *JA* 12.11.

[145] *JA* 13.1. Previously in her prayer of confession and repentance, Aseneth calls God "father of the orphans, and the champion of the persecuted, and the help of them that are oppressed" (*JA* 12.11). Such words may imply a situation in which those converts who, because of their decision to only worship the One God of the Jews, faced not only the passive rejection of those who had been so far their peers, but also endured different kinds of deliberate mistreatment.

much because of the acceptance of a new divine allegiance which would have been accepted within the parameters of ancient polytheistic religions, but because of her rejection of those many other deities worshipped by the family and ancestors. Conversion to Judaism, consequently, is portrayed as affecting matters of social identity and relationships for it implies renunciation of essential elements that form the basic identity structure of the (socio-) religious allegiances of the prospective convert, which in turn, sustain his or her social network.

The manner in which conversion to Judaism has affected the individual's relationship with family and community is a further emphasis seen in *Joseph and Aseneth* in the effect of conversion on the convert's identity. When the heavenly man tells Aseneth that her prayer of repentance has been accepted and that she has been forgiven and salvation is granted to her, she also receives a new name, "City of Refuge",[146] which reflects her relationship to the community. Nickelsburg argues that in this change of identity Aseneth becomes the prototype of the convert and as such acquires a new collective status, as in the case of Abraham.[147] Chesnutt mentions the difficulty of knowing whether this change of name is the result of the influence of other cases of name changing after religious conversion, or as having "more to do with her special prototypical and matriarchal role than with her position as an individual proselyte".[148] It could

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[146] 15.6. Aseneth is commissioned to give shelter to those who come to God in penitence (*JA* 15.6).

[147] Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 261. Cf. Gen 17:5, 15. See, Burchard, Untersuchungen (1965) 112-21.

[148] Chesnutt, From Darkness to Light (1995) 128-9. See, Horsley, "Name Change," (1987) 1-17.

well be a combination of the two. On the one hand, the change of the name reflects the traditional usage,[149] affecting and giving "realism" to the individual role of Aseneth in the narrative. On the other hand, given the author's agenda, the prototypical role of the character is enhanced by the new name so that "the first proselyte is the prototype of future proselytes. She is both woman and city, proselyte and congregation of proselytes. The immortality she has gained is promised to all who follow her example and thereby become citizens of her city."[150] Furthermore, the angelophany serves the purpose of both "confirming the importance of the conversion"[151] and her commissioning,[152] as it has been shown above.

However, if the rejection of Aseneth by her parents reveals one of the consequences of the proselyte's new religious allegiance, in *Joseph and Aseneth*, the new role and belonging of the convert to the Jewish community is affirmed. The author of the account, in order to emphasise the status of the proselyte as fully belonging to the Jewish community, confirms Aseneth's conversion as divinely sanctioned by the presence of the heavenly envoy[153] who tells her that the Lord has heard her confession[154] and that her name is written in the book of

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[149] Sänger, Antikes 179.

[150] Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 261.

[151] Segal, Paul the Convert (1990) 180.

[152] Nickelsburg, Jewish Literature (1981) 261.

[153] The "man from heaven" is compared with Joseph (*JA* 14.8) in a further rhetorical twist, to emphasise the superior character and nature of Joseph the Jew.

[154] *JA* 15.2.

life and will never be removed from it.[155] Furthermore, God's intervention to deliver her from Joseph's brothers who plotted against Aseneth showed that the Lord was fighting for her against them.[156] The divided stance over Aseneth among the brothers of Joseph[157] may reveal an inner strife within Judaism over the acceptance of new converts. Such a conflict may be the cause for the augmentation of Aseneth's moral qualities and her reception by Jacob who blessed and kissed her, and ate and drank with her as a sign of acceptance and fellowship.[158] As Chesnutt remarks, Aseneth is carefully portrayed "in terms which correspond in many specific ways with the portrayal of Joseph."[159] This certainly would be done with the intention of justifying and legitimising the full acceptance of the convert as a member of the Jewish community to those who opposed and denied their integration.

1.5.2.2 Possessions

In the portrait of Aseneth as a Gentile worshiper of many gods, the author describes the place where she lives as the top floor of a ten-storey tower at his father's house. There are ten rooms in that storey and one of them is decorated in gold and silver and precious stones and full of the idols of the many gods of

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[155] *JA* 15.3.

[156] *JA* 28.1.

[157] *JA* 24.2.

[158] *JA* 22.5-6.

[159] Chesnutt, From Death to Life (1995) 110.

Egypt. Aseneth worships and makes sacrifices to them in that room.[160] On another occasion, when Aseneth's parents come from their country property, she receives them with bracelets with names of idols inscribed on them and precious stones all about her with the names of the Egyptian gods stamped on them.[161] Such a graphic description of Aseneth's religious devotion helps to emphasise the change in Aseneth at her conversion.

It is in her rejection of idols that the connection is seen between her conversion and her possessions. This is because the rejection of idolatry is an essential requirement of any convert to Judaism,[162] and, in the case of Aseneth's conversion, it also indicates charitable actions that operate as proof of the repentance already visible in her leaving her idols. After smashing the gold and silver idols that she had worshipped up to now, Aseneth also gives away the fine clothes she was wearing before she put on more austere clothing and started fasting. The remarkable thing in Aseneth's action is not her ascetic attitude, seen elsewhere in Jewish written tradition, but the fact that she gives to the poor both the gold and silver pieces of the idols she has crushed and the fine clothes she

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[160] *JA* 2.4-5.

[161] *JA* 3.10.

[162] According to McKnight, "repudiation of idolatry is probably the most common form of resistance to gentile culture in Judaism" (Light [1991] 23), a fact that is reflected in Joseph's opposition to sitting at the table with Pentephres and of greeting Aseneth with a kiss, for they are idol worshippers. Judaism in *Joseph and Aseneth* is clearly depicted as emphasising the rejection of idolatry, as it is also the case in other Jewish contemporary writers like Philo (Dec. 70-81, 156; *Contempl.* 7-9) and Josephus (*A.J.* 15.267-91; 17.149-54; *B.J.* 1.641-50)

was wearing.[163] This is unprecedented in other contemporary conversion stories[164] and has passed unnoticed in most of the main works on *Joseph and Aseneth*. Interestingly enough, it is one of the factors involved in conversion in the Lukan accounts. Examples of this are seen in the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus who gives half of his wealth to the poor (19:8) and in the account of the ruler who asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life and is ultimately required to sell all he has and give to the poor and then to follow him (18:18-20). For Luke, a proper use of possessions to help the poor is an important sign of an individual's repentance.

1.5.3 Summary

The account of the conversion of Aseneth is the most complete description of conversion among those studied in the present chapter, although, like the others, it is not lacking the ideological embellishment of what certainly is a description of an ideal convert. Although *Joseph and Aseneth* presents various elements and circumstances relevant to conversion, it is those of more social relevance that have been considered as more pertinent to the present study.

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[163] It should not be confused with the current patron-client relationship for the text only mentions that she "threw them out of the window for the poor and needy" (10.13), without any reference to any sort of reciprocity or heavenly reward. If the work originates in the Greco-Roman world, Aseneth's action becomes a novelty.

[164] This is a different situation to the conversion to groups like the Therapeutae or Cynics that implied a renunciation of possessions or the use of them for the common good of the group. In the case of Aseneth, she is depicted intentionally giving those valuables to the poor because of her repentance.

The different factors at stake in Aseneth's conversion, even if addressed to a Jewish audience, reflect not only the ideal portrait of a member of the Jewish community but also become a prototypical description the convert and of the process of conversion. There is description of the attitudes of the faithful Jew and those of the Gentile, which are set in polar opposition. While the Jew worships the One God, the Gentile venerates a multitude of deities. Such a contrasting situation expresses itself in social terms. Thus, the Jew rejects table-fellowship and intimacy with Gentiles because they worship other deities and idols, while Gentiles praise the God of the Jews. However, when a Gentile accepts the One God of the Jews she is ostracised by her own family and social peers, although she finds a new home in the community of reception. The decision to worship the One God of the Jews, then, sets community boundaries and allegiances.

There is also the issue of the convert's identity, which is now defined by that of the new community. The convert changes her name based on her new community relationships and the role she plays in it. As a proof of her change of heart, charitable actions towards the poor reflect the new reality of the convert, which is confirmed in table-fellowship.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This general survey of four contemporary sources within Judaism, Philo, Josephus, Qumran and *Joseph and Aseneth*, has provided an introduction to what it meant in social terms to convert either to Judaism or to one of the pious religious groups within it. Understanding the social significance of the religious demands within Judaism with which people were confronted has been the main intention of this section in order to provide a background for the research into the Gospel of Luke.

Gentiles approaching conversion to Jewish faith discovered that an important dimension to their decision had to do with the fact that they had to remould and, on occasions, renounce most of the elements which defined their social reality. Devoting themselves to a "one God" religion implied renouncing the main identity factors such as ancestors (veneration related to worshipping other gods), fellow citizens (who looked at converts with suspicion because of their exclusive attitude and rituals) and family and household. Thus, allegiance to the God of Israel demanded total priority in the value system of the prospective convert.

For those coming to one of the religious sects referred to in the sources used, a transformation of the basics of their social existence has been seen. The search for ritual and social purity made most of the groups, in different degrees, abstain

from family ties, possessions, and all sorts of social values which might distract from piety. However, it has been argued that the social values they rejected were not just dismissed but reinterpreted, with varying degrees of thoroughness. Other social factors such as social roles, possessions, status, and table-fellowship were reshaped in a different way suitable to their new understanding of piety towards God. There was no intention of coping with views different to their own in the wider society. Instead they withdraw from it in order to live differently. The underlying idea was that such a step was not without compensation since the new community in many cases provided a substitute for what had been left behind.

2. CONVERSION AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN MILIEU

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to establish the social implications of conversion to Judaism during the first century of the era under consideration, attention has been paid in the previous chapter to how conversion affected people according to the diverse religious situation of Judaism as depicted by existing literary accounts. Two lines of inquiry have been considered. One has been the analysis of accounts of Gentiles turning to Judaism, the other one being the study of conversion within the religious sects within Judaism. Now, attention will be drawn to another background source, this time provided by the philosophical schools of thought. With this second series of inquiries into conversion accounts contemporary with Luke's work, a more complete picture of conversion and its social implications will be provided. The pertinence of this study is clear if, as Meek affirms, "in antiquity, conversion as moral transformation of the individual is the business of philosophy rather than of religion."[1] However, the title of this chapter "Conversion and Philosophy" is justified as a warning against imposing an anachronistic view on the interrelation between the two concepts.

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[1] Meeks, Origins (1993) 23.

The methodology will differ from that of the preceding chapter. This is because of the scarcity of evidence dealing with the sociological demands and influences of philosophy on people and society as displayed in day-by-day life. The interest of the philosophical schools in spreading their beliefs and thus of making "converts" calls for a different method of analysis from that which has been used previously in this study. Thus both the lack of sufficient information and the characteristics of the philosophical movements will demand that this discussion centres on how they interacted with their own people and societies and how such an interaction affected, or attempted to affect, the social reality of sympathisers.

The Cynics are a special case,[2] and thus extra attention will be devoted to them. Their radical, offensive and provocative external appearance struck the sensibility of their contemporaries. The attitude and behaviour of the Cynic philosopher had so little in common with the socially-accepted pattern that becoming one brought about a revolution in life style. To that extent, the extreme approach to life of Cynicism called for nothing less than a conversion.[3] The explicit material on the social aspects related to that commitment, as well as the fact that the demand and cost of it lie, *prima facie,* within the domain of this study, justifies such an attention.

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[2] "The anecdotes told of the founder and of the even more famous Diogenes testify to the enormous impression made by this movement in society" Nock, Conversion (1933) 169.

[3] Although the question of the suitability of the term "conversion" with regard to philosophy is a matter to be dealt with later, it has been used in accordance with Nock (Conversion [1933] 169): "adhesion to such ideas [those of the Cynics] meant something like conversion" because of the radical change the potential convert underwent.

2.2 CONVERSION TO PHILOSOPHY?

2.2.1. Introduction

The emergence of philosophy in the Hellenistic period coincided with a time of social change. For instance, the security provided by the closed moral/religious system of each city-state, qualified by what was customary in society and its own environment, was now threatened and destroyed by a new global and all-embracing political, economic and social reality (that of the Macedonian empire) and by new spiritual and intellectual approaches and references, mostly foreign to people. This new reality provoked a situation of social crisis which made people consider their lives and awakened their interest in what philosophy might offer to them.[4] But did this amount to what might be called "conversion"? Did conversion apply to the interaction between philosophers and people? Was there any interest in making "converts"? The present study of the social reality of contemporary philosophical movements will attempt to answer these questions.

2.2.2 The Aim of Philosophy

The object of this section is not to display the whole array of philosophical doctrines for which there is so much evidence. The purpose is to provide a basic reference description of what the fundamental goals of philosophical teachers were when they spread their convictions.

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[4] There is the example of Dio of Prusa who for a time wrote against philosophy, but after a personal crisis that took him into exile and poverty "imperceptibly he gravitated towards the only way of finding a scheme of values which would make life tolerable and give it meaning" Cf., Nock Conversion (1933) 173-4. The personal crisis came first, not any kind of philosophical consideration.

The challenge philosophers placed before their audiences could be described as a different understanding, and a superior way of life and values to the ones they already had, manifested in an inner state of security and stability.[5] In his chapter on "Conversion to Philosophy", Nock notes the main reasons why the philosophical schools held an important place in people's lives: their "intelligent explanations of phenomena" and the fact that "the schools offered a life with a scheme".[6] Thus one important social role philosophy played was to teach people how to read their circumstances and make sense out of them, and also to equip these people to improve or change their situation.

> Wherefore it is necessary to make philosophy as it were the head and front of all education. For as regards the care of the body men have discovered two sciences, the medical and the gymnastic, of which the one implants health, the other sturdiness, in the body; but for the illness and affections of the mind philosophy is the remedy. For through philosophy and in company with philosophy it is possible to attain knowledge of what is honourable and what it is shameful, what is just, what, in brief, is to be chosen and what is to be avoided, how a man must bear himself in his relations with the gods, with his parents, with his elders, with the laws, with strangers, with those in authority, with friends, with women, with children, with servants; that one ought to reverence the gods, to honour one's parents, to respect one's elders, to be obedient to the laws, to yield to those in authority, to love one's friends, to be chaste with women, to be affectionate with children, and not to be overbearing with slaves; and, most important of all, not to be overjoyful at success or overmuch distressed at misfortune, nor to be dissolute in pleasures, nor impulsive and brutish in temper. These things I regard as pre-eminent among all the advantages which accrue from philosophy.[7]

In this general description of the task of philosophy, it is found first of all that the goal was a healthy mind through "knowledge" which was obtained through

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[5] "This the new philosophies of the Hellenistic period proceeded to supply. They differed in their recipes, but they all claim to give their followers the same good under different names, a self-sufficient, imperturbable tranquillity proof against all the shocks and changes of Fortune, the shifting restless insecurity of human affairs" (Armstrong, Philosophy [1957] 115).

[6] Conversion (1933) 164-186.

[7] Pseudo-Plutarch The Education of the Children 7DE (Malherbe, Moral Exhortation [1986] 30-1).

education. The underlying idea was that the previous state was not an adequate or "healthy" one and so there was no possibility of making right decisions, which, of course had an effect upon society. Knowledge was not an intellectual abstraction but it identified what, as will be shown below, philosophers described as "seeing". It expressed itself in social terms, providing discernment and proper criteria to select the right thing in a variety of social areas. It helped in the decision-making process concerning issues of choosing honour over shame, just over unjust, right over wrong; or issues of right behaviour in areas such as the family/household ("parents", "elders", "women" and "children"); household/power ("slaves"); social relationships ("friends" and "strangers"); government ("laws" and "authority"); religion ("gods"). Besides all this, there was an important emphasis on the individual with regard to himself. Philosophical knowledge helped one face the ups and downs of life ("success" and "misfortune") and to attain soberness ("not to be dissolute") and self-control (not to be "impulsive and brutish in temper"). These were important goals within most of the philosophical schools.

In the endeavour to relate the worlds of philosophy and conversion, it should be borne in mind that modern presuppositions about the importance of the wide diffusion of ideas and of gaining as many adherents as possible could be misleading. Nowadays these may be presumptions about the degree of personal and social acknowledgement expected from and obtained from those sympathising with the philosopher's ideas. It should be borne in mind that, in ancient times, these presuppositions varied in relevance and degree in the

different philosophical schools. For instance, the Cynic and Epicurean[8] movements were the most eager ones to share their truths. But although they expected to make people reflect on their way of life, this did not necessarily imply their actually becoming Cynics themselves[9] or joining the Epicurean communities. The invitation was to a change or improvement of life but not always to adopt the philosopher's way of life. On the other hand, Nock points out that "adhesion to Socrates somehow meant giving your soul to him".[10] Thus, it can be contended that it was a question of degree, but spreading its beliefs was not a general concern of the "philosophic movement in the main".[11] This all reflects the fact that the majority of the philosophical schools perceived their role as one of improving people's lives within their own social spheres, and not as one of persuading them to join a given community or of inviting them to live in solitude. Philosophers in the main equipped and taught people how to live their daily lives where they were already.

However, it cannot be denied that philosophy "was able both to turn men from evil and to hold before them a good, perhaps never to be attained, but presenting a permanent object of desire to which one seemed to draw gradually nearer."[12]

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[8] "Epicureanism," (1977) 522; De Lacy, "Epicureanism," (1967) 2-3; idem, "Epicurus," (1967) 3-5.

[9] They were philosophers so their position was a professional one. Only they would separate completely from society.

[10] Nock, Conversion (1933) 166.

[11] Nock, Conversion (1933) 165. Goodman also denies the widespread idea of philosophers wishing to convert as many people as possible, Mission and Conversion (1994) 32.

[12] Nock, Conversion (1933) 185.

Seneca himself spoke of his own personal experience with philosophy as a matter not of mere improvement but of transformation:

> I feel my dear Lucilius, that I am being not only reformed, but transformed. I do not yet, however, assure myself, or indulge the hope, that there are no elements left in me which need to be changed. Of course there are many that should be made more compact, or made thinner, or be brought into greater prominence. And indeed this very fact is proof that my spirit is altered into something better, -that it can see its own faults, of which it was previously ignorant. In certain cases sick men are congratulated because they themselves have perceived that they are sick.[13]

The way Seneca described the alteration of his spirit as "able to see" was important for it was a common philosophical description of the effect of philosophy on the individual. "Seeing" becomes the turning point from a life of self-compliance to a transformed existence, whose references are provided by the given philosophical teaching. Particular, however, to this experience of Seneca was the fact that, in his description of the experience he was going through, he allowed for a process taking place. This was the general attitude of the Stoics[14] whose doctrine of moral progression was a middle way between wisdom and evil. This was not the approach in other philosophical schools since normally "conversion stories always idealize. The turn-about is instantaneous".[15]

Another element found in Seneca's text was that the individual's own perception and initiative did not motivate the change but there was an external factor catalysing its influence, namely philosophy. However Seneca's writings show

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[13] Seneca, Epistles 6 [Malherbe, Moral Exhortation (1986) 64].

[14] Annas, "Stoicism," (1996) 1446; Hallie, "Stoicism," (1967) 19-22.

[15] Meeks, Origins (1993) 23.

how much he had embodied the philosophical teaching not to distinguish the operation initially prompted by philosophy from that of his own spirit – in both cases that which philosophers called "seeing". This was what the example of the sick person implied, i.e., that the awareness of the sickness came not from a medical diagnosis but from an internal perception. The individual experienced a change in his social reality, not so much because it had changed but because of his transformed approach to it. His perception of reality varied and thus his own social interaction ranged from his own individual perceptions to the forms and values which constituted his society. To this extent a conversion process could be talked of since there was a deep change in understanding and values.

2.2.3 The Philosophical Expansion

Moral instruction through teaching was the most extended activity of philosophers who saw themselves as teachers trying to persuade others of their tenets concerning the norms of life. They tried to assist people in their situations of failure and to teach them how to avoid them. The instruction would be given in different ways. Some would be done on an individual basis. Crates performed his activity "from house to house reconciling family quarrels and giving good sound practical moral advice"[16] thus taking the philosophical teaching into the more intimate sphere of the household. It was also a measure of one's social position to have a teacher of philosophy at one's own private service. "We know previously the calling in of philosophers as tutors for kings' sons (as Philip sent

[16] Armstrong, Philosophy (1957) 118.

for Aristotle) or as adviser and companions (as Euphraeus was sent by Plato to Perdiccas III, Dionysius sent for Plato, and Alexander took Callisthenes East...). The rise of Rome brought many Greek philosophers into Roman households."[17] Another kind of instruction would be in a classroom setting in which the philosophical teacher would be surrounded by his disciples or a much broader kind of audience. Epictetus (iii.23-30) said that the "lecture-room of a philosopher is a hospital,"[18] which provided a definition of one of the social roles of philosophy as healing from a sickness or defective morality and helping people to "seeing".

Another positive factor presented in Nock's evaluation on the positive contribution of philosophy is that "there was the philosopher in person to hear".[19] The personal role of the teacher was of the utmost importance since learning was not just a matter of hearing a speech but a question of imitating the teacher. "A philosopher's practical example of the principles he taught was thought to be a most important demonstration of his integrity."[20] Turning to Seneca once again, evidence is found on how much the teacher's personal attitude counted. Thus in one of his letter to Lucilius he says

> I shall therefore send to you the actual books; (...) Of course, however, the living voice and the intimacy of a common life will help you more than the written word. You must go to the scene of action, first, because men put more faith in their eyes than in their ears, and second, because the way is long if one follows patterns. Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had

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[17] Nock, Conversion (1933) 178.

[18] Nock, Conversion (1933) 183.

[19] Nock, Conversion (1933) 176.

[20] Malherbe, Moral Exhortation (1986) 135-6.

> merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates. It was not the class-room of Epicurus, but living together under the same roof, that made the great men of Metrodorus, Hermarchus, and Polyaenus. Therefore I summon you, not merely that you may derive benefit, but that you may confer benefit; for we can assist each other greatly.[21]

Hence, a given teaching was evaluated not so much, or at least not only, by its content as such, but also by the extent to which the teacher lived accordingly. Consequently, learning found its proper place in its social dimension. The social interaction of the teacher's daily life in consonance with his instruction became essential in the decision to follow his path.

Moreover philosophers were not always indifferent to the kind of audience they had to address. There were Stoics who related to the upper-classes. But there were Cynics and Stoics for instance, who did not distinguish people according to their abilities. This was criticised by Seneca:

> One must not talk to a man unless he is willing to listen. That is why it is often doubted whether Diogenes and the other Cynics, who employed an undiscriminating freedom of speech and offered advice to any who came in their way, ought to have pursued such a plan... Wisdom... should have a definite aim; choosing only those who will make progress, but withdrawing from those whom it has come to regard as hopeless.[22]

The argument here was about who was prepared to comply with the path of wisdom. Only those suited for the task were to be cared for. This created an intellectual, and therefore moral, elite. But there was another factor which made

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[21] Epistles 6 [Malherbe, Moral Exhortation (1986) 65].

[22] Seneca, Epistles 29.1-7 as quoted in Malherbe, Moral Exhortation (1986) 28.

philosophy in many cases an issue of a social elite. This was, of course, that "education cost money and demanded leisure".[23] If poor people complained about this, they were told to blame fate or luck for their situation.[24] This was how people in a position of power in society justified their situation and evaded any responsibility for other people's misfortunes by blaming it on the individual's destiny. This reinforced the social *status quo* and prevented the masses from being educated and therefore from improving their lives, which in turn left the people in power unchallenged. Consequently, adherence to philosophy, although it urged those in power to live an exemplary life, became, in some contexts, a sign of social status and power, and not necessarily of an eager desire for moral learning and change.

2.2.4 Summary

In Nock's words, the philosophical movement "remained a professional movement, ready to communicate its conclusions to disciples but not fired with any desire to free humanity from error or to lead it into truth."[25] This leads to the first important element in this study, the fact that it is a question of degree as to how many of the different philosophical schools were eager to share their beliefs and to what extent. Secondly, even though the attempts to reach people were less than would nowadays be assumed, still their influence must not be discounted. It has been shown that the expectation of those sharing their beliefs was that

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[23] Meeks, Origins (1993) 24.

[24] Meeks, Origins (1993) 222 n.14.

[25] Nock, Conversion (1933) 165.

"devotion to philosophy would make a difference to their hearers"[26] or provoke a "turning around the soul", to use Plato's words.[27]

How does this relate to the concept of a conversion? It was when, through philosophical learning and education people underwent important changes in their lives, that their experience can be defined as "conversion to philosophy". Thus, the study of Seneca's experience is a case in point. From this it can be deduced that positive responses to the same teaching can sometimes be considered conversion and sometimes not. For some people it was a question of whether what they experienced improved, reformed or transformed their lives. There was a similarity to conversion in the change some people experienced when a complete alteration in their lifestyles took place under the influence of the teaching of the philosopher.

> In sum, it seems unlikely that adherents of any of the distinctive philosophies of the early Roman empire sought converts to their own self-defined groups... They tried to influence the general behaviour of men for the better, to instil a little of their doctrines into the lives of others and so to improve society as a whole and make people happy. Their aim was universal in scope, but their mission was to educate rather than proselytize.[28]

For the most part, in ancient times, it was a process of "imitation" and "emulation" of social behaviour which people then assimilated into their daily lives, but not of conversion.

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[26] Nock, Conversion (1933) 181.

[27] Republic, 518D (Cf. Nock, Conversion [1933] 179).

[28] Goodman, Mission and Conversion (1994) 36-7.

2.3 THE CYNICS

2.3.1 Introduction

The assertion that "Cynicism was not really a philosophy but a way of life",[29] has been a common-place in its analysis over the centuries and from its very beginning.[30] Cynicism involved an extreme individualism leading to self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια)[31] that expressed itself in a variety of ways. However there were common characteristics which identified all Cynics. As Malherbe points out "what made a Cynic was his dress and conduct, self-sufficiency, harsh behaviour towards what appeared as excesses, and a practical ethical idealism, but not a detailed arrangement of a systematic resting on Socratic-Antisthenic principles."[32] Below, a general overview coming from different Cynic writings will be presented, which will provide sufficient information on what adherence to the Cynic way of life, in their search for virtue, would imply.

2.3.2 Society and Constituency

It would be misleading to conclude that Cynicism, because of its anti-social attitude and extreme individualism, did not show any interest in people. Crates' going from house to house to give his advice to families with problems has been

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[29] Armstrong, Philosophy (1957) 117.

[30] Diogenes Laertius, who in the third century C.E., wrote on the lives of different philosophers and their philosophical teachings, acknowledges the fact that many considered Cynicism more as way of life than a philosophical school. D.L. 1.19-20, as mentioned by Malherbe, Self-Definition (1982) 49 n.19.

[31] Billerbeck considers self-sufficiency as one of the emblems of Cynicism shown through their extremely austere way of life ("Greek Cynicism," [1991] 151).

[32] Self-Definition (1982) 49-50. MacMullen states that Cynics "could be told from the uniform of their calling: dirty long hair, beard, dirty long cloak, a staff, and a little knapsack" (Christianizing [1984] 38).

mentioned above. When spreading their convictions, which they did in open public places, they did not make distinctions between people. Their advice was to make good use of the opportunities which arose to present their moral views to other people: "If the opportunity offers, the Cynic must speak up on the public platform like Socrates",[33] but not merely by chance, but also by design: "You must try going out into the market place, where the mass of people spend their time".[34] So it can be said that Cynic philosophers showed a concern for providing moral advice to the largest number of people possible.

The social *status quo* was challenged by the Cynics in their rejection of all kinds of social customs and values of their society. They did this by means of provocative (even insulting) speech and gestures. Their reason was that they wanted to make people think about their way of life and to adopt the Cynic position with all its implications: "Look the difficulties over carefully, and then, if all seems well, come on up and engage in philosophy; that's if you're willing to pay the price for being undisturbed, free, and serene".[35]

It is important to notice that Cynics did not make social distinctions when considering people as candidates to adopt their philosophy. Thus, "you only need to learn how to live a healthy life, like a slave or a labourer, like a genuine

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[33] Epictetus III xxii 26 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 2).

[34] ps.Diogenes 6 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 2).

[35] Epictetus III xv 12 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 181).

philosopher... like Cleanthes, who studied while he pumped water for a living".[36] Women too followed the wandering life of Cynicism, since "virtue is the same for women and men alike".[37] Thus the question became: "would it ever be proper for men, and only for men, to try to give careful consideration to the issue of living their lives well – in effect, to do philosophy – would it be proper for men to do this, but not women?"[38] The Cynics subverted social stratification. This however was not the result of an egalitarian attitude towards people and society since they considered themselves superior to the rest of the people. Armstrong describes the Cynics as "cosmopolitans, regarding the universe as their city, a commonwealth of good and wise men (the foolish masses of mankind were outsiders in this cosmopolis with no real citizen rights)".[39] In sum, based on their emphasis on a simple life, self-sufficiency and individualism, the Cynics disregarded the commonly accepted social basis for life in organized communities. They despised the restrictive boundaries of the polis in favour of their citizenship of the cosmos or cosmopolitanism.

2.3.3 Community and Kinship

How did Cynics relate to each other? There was their emphasis on freedom, their individualistic attitude, and their wandering vocation. As a result, a community

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[36] Epictetus III xxvi 23 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 4).

[37] Antisthenes, LEP VI 12 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 3).

[38] Musonius III (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 3).

[39] Armstrong, Philosophy (1957) 118.

or a Cynic congregation was felt to be impossible.[40] They despised society and its conventions which also included family, although not *per se* but because of the priority they gave to a very particular and inherently unstable way of life:

> In a city of wise people... a Cynic would find a wife like himself and for a father-in-law another like himself, and he'd bring up children to be like himself. But with things at present like a battlefield, perhaps a Cynic should be undistracted... not concerned with family relationships that he'd then be able to break only at destructive cost to his character as a truly good human being, and be able to maintain only at the cost of his role as messenger and scout and herald of the Gods.[41]

Thus, the Cynics' total repudiation of family convention was not a rejection of terms that were given new content. This can be seen in how Cynicism accepted marriage,[42] since they travelled with their wives,[43] and parents,[44] and in how they portrayed their cosmopolitanism[45] and the gods[46] in family language terms. If,

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[40] Meeks expresses the impossibility by affirming that conversion to Cynicism was "to an austere self-sufficiency (autarkeia)"(Origins [1993] 25). To force the argument, one could talk about the scattered community formed by wise people, or reword it in the terms of Diogenes Laertius "the wise man is a friend to his kind." D.L. 6.105 as mentioned by Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," (1996) 113.

[41] Epictetus III xxii 67-9; cf. LEP VI 88, 96; Musonius XVI; Lucian Runaways 18; per contra, e.g. Demonax 9 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 75).

[42] What was the Creator's purpose in originally dividing our human race in two, and providing us with our respective genital organs, so we are male and female? And then in building in a strong desire to share sexual union with each other, mixed with a deep yearning for each other's company, the man for the woman, the woman for the man? Isn't it quite clear that he meant them to come together as a single unit, to live together, and to work hard to share a common livelihood together, and to procreate children and bring them up - and so perpetuate our human race?" Musonius XIV (Downing Christ and the Cynics [1988] 139).

[43] Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment (1986) 144.

[44] "People who sin against their parents can quite reasonably be held guilty of sacrilege, because parents are the source of the most primary good we receive" [the divine give of life itself] Dio 31.15. *Per contra* "One need not thank one's parents... for the fact of being born, since coming to birth happens by nature...". ps-Diogenes 21 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 131).

[45] "Asked where he came from, Diogenes said, I am a citizen of the world" LEP VI 63; cf. 72,98. "Dear friend, a Cynic has all humankind for his children, the men as his sons, the women as his daughters... He acts as a father, as a brother, as a servant of Zeus, the common parent of us all." Epictetus III xxii 81-2 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 126).

[46] "In their dreams young children often reach out their arms to absent parents, filled with deep and intensely-felt longing for a father or mother from whom they've been torn away. In just the same way do we humans love the Gods who do us good and are our kin, and we feel a deep desire to be with them and

therefore, the language of family was to be kept and used, it was to be (re-) refined by virtue.

Moles tries to bring together the Cynic's elitism and the self-sufficiency of the wise and their concern for other people's moral state shown in the public spreading of their convictions. The underlying idea is, that although there was certainly an elitism which entailed the ruthless rejection of other people, Cynics acknowledged their potential kinship with others and therefore saw themselves as having a responsibility to teach them the way to virtue or "life according to nature".[47] Thus, Cynicism embodied the contradiction, or conflicting levels of reality, between their own self-sufficiency and contempt towards the rest of the people on the one hand, and their philanthropy on the other.[48]

2.3.4 Possessions

"Someone asked for a definition of a life lived richly. Demonax replied that only a free man was living life to the full. 'But there are lots of free citizens around.' 'What I mean,' rejoined Demonax, 'is someone who neither hopes for anything nor fears for anything'"[49]. An ascetic life and poverty describe the Cynic attitude towards possessions since "riches have prevented many from living as

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enjoy their company in every way possible" Dio 12.61 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 58). "We know that no human being is an orphan, but everyone, everywhere has the Father to care for them" Epictetus III xxiv 15 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 159).

[47] "Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," (1996) 114-5.

[48] Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism," (1996) 15-6.

[49] Lucian, Demonax 20 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 19).

philosophers. Poverty is unencumbered and carefree."[50] There is the example of Crates who, being a wealthy man, sold everything he had and gave it to "his fellow citizen" or "threw it into the sea".[51] Begging became the way they made their living. The quotation from Epictetus "take a look at me then, says the Cynic. I've no home, no city, no property, no slave... no governor's tiny mansion, nothing but earth and sky and one work cloak"[52] makes a clear reference to how the Cynic renunciation of possessions was so complete that they would not even have a house to shelter them.

It was clearly stated by Cynic philosophers that to care about possessions was to take one's life in the wrong direction. It was the change of attitude towards possessions that showed that the disciple was going along the right path. It could be said that the decision-making process built on the dichotomy between possessions and poverty, between wrong and right: not as a sacrifice but as an indication of a personal attitude. "Socrates used to say that the fewer his needs, the nearer he was to the Gods."[53]

2.3.5 Summary

Throughout this examination of the Cynic world some of the characteristics that were common have been exposed. All of them were set before the potential

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[50] Seneca, EM XVII 3 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 20).

[51] LEP VI 87 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 26).

[52] Epictetus III xxii 47 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 38).

[53] LEP II 27 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 69). This is supposed to be a process since the invitation is to "practice reducing your needs, and so come as close as possible to God" ps-Crates 11 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 17).

disciple to consider and decide whether to join in or not - a difficult decision for many.[54] That person would have to cast himself off from his social reality on every level. In the personal sphere he would have to redefine his own esteem, to the point of not caring for other people's low opinion of him.[55] In the family sphere, there was nobody who should hold him back from his decision and even such considerations as his sphere of influence lost their appeal to the convert. In the case of opposition, Musonius Rufus reminded his followers that it might be the case that "your own father tells you not to do philosophy, but Zeus, the Father whom all humans and all the Gods have in common, urgently tells you... [that] obeying your own father, you're obeying a fellow human being. Doing philosophy, you're obeying God."[56]

But beyond the very process of decision-making there were the long-term consequences of the decision. Becoming a Cynic disciple would mean losing one's honour according to social standards of the time, despising family, abandoning all properties,[57] jobs,[58] departing from social relationships and land. After all, it is required from "the prospective disciple to exercise complete

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[54] "The mass of the people accept our Cynic aims. But when they see how hard it is to realise them, they desert our speakers" ps-Crates 21 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 2).

[55] "Someone wanted to study philosophy under him. Diogenes gave him a fish to carry and commanded him to follow him. But the man threw it away out of shame and departed. Some time later Diogenes met him and laughed and said, 'our friendship was broken by a fish'." D.L. 6.36 (Droge, Call Stories [1983] 255).

[56] Musonius XVI (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 18).

[57] "The next day he shared out his property among his family, slung on a satchel and a doubled worn cloak, and followed me" ps-Diogenes 38.5 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 42).

[58] Although we know of some positive views on working the land or doing manual labour, this is not the most common situation but it is not a possibility to be excluded totally. Cf. Musonius 11 (Malherbe, Moral Exhortation [1986] 151-2).

disregard for social convention".[59] However, it could be said that these demands were in many cases a rhetorical construct. Their rejection of family conventions has been shown and, although some travelled with their wives, they despised cities but many lived in them since they had to be there to beg and preach. In the cases when such demands were made concrete, it was not clear whether all that Cynics left behind was lost for good or, in some cases, just for as long as they followed Cynic philosophy. It may be that there was a possibility of recovering what had been given up, not only in terms of material things but also of honour and relationships.

Evidence has been found of caring attitudes towards each other but not of a community in which mutual care would take place. Cynics spoke of a world-wide family in a world they confronted and despised. The individual's own virtue was what mattered so that "if you'd seized his property, Diogenes would have let it go rather than follow you for it. If you'd seized hold of his leg, he'd have let that go, and his body, his family, his friends, his native land...".[60] Once again it was certainly a literary emphasis, but the underlying idea could be summarised in this way: conversion to Cynicism implied the most radical and all embracing transformation in people's lives, without any lasting reference to what the previous life was about. Only one thing mattered, namely virtue.

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[59] Droge Call Stories (1983) 255.

[60] Epictetus IV I 153-4 (Downing, Christ and the Cynics [1988] 79).

3. CONVERSION IN THE PREACHING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

(Luke 3:1-17)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first two chapters of his gospel, Luke introduces the births and ministries of both John and Jesus with corresponding prophecies. With regard to John, there are two sets of prophetic words, firstly, those of an angel of the Lord to Zechariah (1:15-17) and, secondly, those of Zechariah himself (1:76-77). Some elements are recurrent in these two passages, which disclose key features of the ministry of John in terms also characteristic of the Lukan writings. Thus, we are told that John will be filled with the Holy Spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται [1:15])[1] and become a prophet (προφήτης [1:76; 7:26; 20:6])[2] who will go before the Lord, preparing his way (ἑτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ [1:76]).[3] The goal of his ministry is people's salvation (σωτηρία [1:77])[4] through the forgiveness of sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, 1:77; 3:3).[5] According to the Lukan account, the ministry of John the Baptist is prefigured, then, in the context of the redemptive plan and initiative of God, described by the prophetic words of Zechariah (1:67-79), "he will turn (ἐπιστρέψει) many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God"

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[1] Cf. 1:41, 67; 22:22; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9; πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου, 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24.

[2] Cf. 4:24; 7:16, 39; 9:8, 19; 13:33; 24:19; Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10.

[3] ἑτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου (3:4); ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου (7:27).

[4] Cf. 1:69, 71; 19:9; Acts 4:12; 13:26, 47; 16:17

[5] Cf. Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18.

(πολλοὺς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐπιστρέψει ἐπὶ κύριον τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν, 1:16). Thus, the divine salvific initiative behind the ministry of John has *conversion* (ἐπιστρέφω [1:16-17])[6] as the intended consequence, which provides the proper ground for the inclusion of this Lukan text on the preaching of John the Baptist as relevant to our topic.

The present section of Luke (3:1-17) may be divided into five thematic blocks, which will move from the prophetic calling of John (3:1-2), through four different stages of and reactions to his preaching (3-6; 7-9; 10-14; 15-17). These will reveal how people are called to repentance and conversion as the proper response to the divine offer of salvation.

3.2 THE CALLING OF A PROPHET (3:1-2)

Unique to Luke is his long historical[7] introduction to John's ministry (3:1-2). There, we read references to both political and religious leadership, described in hierarchical order, from the Emperor to the High Priest. Thus, action is politically framed under the imperial rule of Tiberius and the different regional governments of Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Philip and Lysanias (3:1). Although the high priest at that time was Caiaphas, Annas is also mentioned, not without significance, for even if he was not high priest any longer, his influence seems to

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[6] Cf. Acts 3:19; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 28:27; ἐπιστροφή, Acts 15:3.

[7] By defining the introductory verses 1-2 as "historical" we mean that they set the coming actions in connection with well-known people, which provides a historical background and thus a sense of reliability to the narration.

have remained strong.[8] These two names are introduced by a reference to the High Priest, which is made in the singular, ἀρχιερέως, since only one could have been the High Priest at the time. An even more concrete temporal reference is given, in which Luke says that the action took place in the fifteenth year of Tiberius as Emperor.[9] This Lukan presentation, absent in any other related sources like Mark, Matthew or *Q*, has a theological thrust, namely, that divine intervention takes place within the historical reality of people, through God's divinely appointed messengers.[10]

The first geographical reference found in this text is to the different territories that the rulers mentioned governed (3:1-2). It helps to locate John within the historical framework in which the divine salvation-historical plan takes place. Since Luke constructs an image of John as being like one of those prophets, as will appear later, a political-geographic description is pertinent.[11]

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[8] We know of the Roman intervention in the election and changes in the position of the High Priest, something Jewish people considered a life-long position. Annas was the High Priest from 6-15 CE, until Gratus deposed him. Eleazar, the son of Annas, followed him as High Priest for two years (16-17 CE). Then came Caiaphas (18-36 CE). The reference to Annas was probably due to both the conviction among Jewish people that he was the rightful High Priest and also to his lasting strong influence in the life of the community.

[9] There is no agreement on how to interpret this piece of information. However, it seems probable that the action is set around 28-29 CE. For a more detailed discussion of the issue and of the different historical characters mentioned, see Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 455-8; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 133-4, Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 168-9; Strobel, "Plädoyer," (1995) 466-9.

[10] Wink, John the Baptist (1968) 51.

[11] It may still be asked whether it is the only purpose in Luke, since the mention of such an insignificant territory as Abilene may require another interpretation. Fitzmyer wonders whether it is due to the Syrian origin of Luke himself, although he thinks a probable reason is that it "relies on information that is wholly independent" (Luke AB [1981] 458). Perhaps it is mentioned in order to include all the territories that once were ruled by Herod Agrippa I (Evans, Saint Luke [1990] 233).

Beyond both such a theological aspect and the explicit comparison between the ways Old Testament prophets and John are introduced, some of the characters make themselves actively present in other instances in Luke.[12] For instance, Pontius Pilate's other appearances are related to the killing of Jewish people in the temple (13:1) and the execution of Jesus (23:1-25). Herod the Tetrarch, on the other hand, is the one who imprisons John (3:20) and later beheads him (9:7-9). It is also against him that Jesus is warned, for Herod wanted to kill him (13:31). Finally, we find Herod taking part in the first stage of the trial that preceded the crucifixion of Jesus (23:6-12). All these characters are perceived negatively, an impression Luke did not create but which was commonly shared by Jewish people, as both Jewish and non-Jewish contemporary references indicate.[13] Nonetheless, such an existing negative perception of political and religious leaders is used by Luke to enhance his characterisation of those who oppose and enter into conflict with Jesus and his ministry as socio-religious leaders of the people.

Although the Lukan version of the story does not place special emphasis on religious people as significantly misunderstanding or resisting the full meaning and implications of the preaching of John, in contrast, for instance, with the

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[12] It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a full description of these characters. For a more detailed presentation on the different historical characters mentioned see Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 455-8; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 133-4, Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 168-9.

[13] Green, based on those references, reminds us of various clashes at that time between Roman authorities and Jewish people. Tiberius' period was full of "trials for treason and sedition and his deportation of Jews from Rome" (cf. Josephus, Bell. 2.9.2-4, §§167-77; Ant. 18.2.2 §35; 18.3.1-2 §§56-62; 18.4.1-2 §§85-89; Philo, Leg. Gaj. 38 §§299-305), while Pilate "held in low esteem Jewish religious sensibilities" (cf. Tacitus, Ann. 15.44.4) and Herod was distinguished by "his loyalty to Rome and concomitant concerns of

Matthean description, in which Pharisees and Sadducees are singled out (Matt 3:7), religious leaders are nonetheless present in the story through the ruling High Priest Caiaphas (linked here to the former but still highly influential High Priest Annas). "Caiaphas and Annas would have exercised virtually unrivalled power and privilege among Jewish people", Green points out.[14] The way they exercised their control over the temple and its activities was not always approved by some of the existing religious Jewish groups. The Essenes, for instance, rejected the legitimacy of the Temple sacrifices performed by those put in their office by the Romans (cf. 1QS 1:11-13; 8:6-10; 9:4-5).[15] Their names also evoked negative connotations among Christian readers since it was at Caiaphas' house that Jesus is first questioned and tortured (22:54-71), and subsequently handed over to Pilate (23:1) in a trial that ended in the crucifixion of Jesus. Furthermore, both Caiaphas and Annas were among those opposing the preaching of Jesus by John and Peter (Acts 4:6). In this passage from Acts is found a contrast between the hostility of the religious ruling class and the more positively presented attitude of the people of Jerusalem. Thus, such an introduction is not only a historical background for the ministry of John but "adds to the growing sense of tension in the narrative".[16]

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a political nature" (cf. Josephus, Ant. 18.2.3 §§36-38; 18.5.2 §§116-19; Vit. §§65-66) (Luke NICNT [1997] 168-9).

[14] Luke NICNT (1997) 169.

[15] Such an opposition was coming, nonetheless, from other groups than the Essenes. See, Evans, "Opposition to the Temple," (1992) 235-53.

[16] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 168.

It is within this historical framework that John received his calling, which Luke expresses in similar ways to the calling of the Old Testament prophets (cf. Is 6:1; Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:1-3; Hag 1:1; Zech 1:1) in which the current year of the reign of the ruler(s) of the time goes together with the divine call of the prospective prophet. That John is intentionally presented as a prophet can also be seen in the contrast with Mark 1:4, where John is just said to have come baptising and preaching, while in Luke, John commences his ministry as the result of God's call. An even more significant remark shows the prophet-like presentation of John by Luke, namely the calling of Jeremiah (Jer 1:1 LXX):

- Τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγένετο ὃ ἐπὶ Ιερεμιαν τὸν τοῦ Χελκιου (Jer 1:1 LXX)

- ἐγένετο ῥῆμα θεοῦ ἐπὶ 'Ιωάννην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν (Luke 3:2)

It is only in Luke that John is said to be τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν (3:2). Marshall thinks that it helps to identify the Baptist with the John mentioned in chap.1.[17] Fitzmyer considers such a reference to be redundant after the lengthy introduction of John in chap.1, so that he sees the text as possibly "the beginning of an earlier form of the Gospel".[18] To this possibility Green responds that there is an intentional redundancy in the text after the prolonged interval brought about by the story of Jesus' birth and childhood, so that the reference to Zechariah provides a necessary element of continuity in the story about John.[19] Above all this, it

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[17] Luke NIGTC (1978) 134-5.

[18] Luke AB (1981) 459.

[19] Luke NICNT (1997) 166.

should be borne in mind that the introduction of John's ministry is similar to the Old Testament prophets, in which there are also references to the name of the given prophet's father (cf. Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1; Zech 1:1).[20]

Another important spatial reference is provided by the wilderness (3:2), which Luke sees as the appropriate place for a prophetic calling, since it allows for preparation (cf. 1:80) both of oneself[21] and of "the way of the Lord" (cf. Isa 40:3).[22] This relationship between *the way of the Lord* through which salvation comes and the *wilderness* is not unknown in Judaism, where it is related to both deliverance from judgement and liberation, as a kind of new Exodus motif (cf. Isa 35:1-2; 40:3-5; Ezek 20.33-44; Hos 2:14-23; Mic 7:15).[23]

3.3 THE PREACHING OF SALVATION (3:3-6)

The Jordan region becomes the area in which John carries out his ministry (3:3).[24] Even though the area is not clearly defined, the important emphasis for the reader is that it is the area in which John develops his itinerant preaching of the "baptism for repentance", as the herald of divine salvation. There is a definite sense of geographical movement in the way Luke presents the redactional

[20] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 285-6.

[21] Cf. CD 8.12-15. This text provides a parallel to the life of John since it criticises those who "have not kept apart from people" (in the desert [?], 3:2) and have "walked in the ways of the wicked" (in contrast to the "way of the Lord", 3:4) and they are compared to "serpents" ("brood of vipers", 3:7).

[22] See, Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 143.

[23] See, Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 169-70.

[24] For a detailed analysis of the geographical location of John's ministry and his possible connections with the Essenes, see, Taylor, The Immerser (1997) 42-48.

reference to John's itinerant preaching as taking place in "all the region about the Jordan" (3:3). It runs contrary to the way both Mark and Matthew do it, namely, a more static one, with John preaching in the wilderness and the people coming to him (Matt 3:5 and Mark 1:5). Even though in v. 7 it is said that John addresses "the crowds that came out to be baptized by him", such a reference comes to express the intended answer to or consequence of the divine initiative expressed through the preaching of John. It is certainly a redactional addition by Luke in order to maintain the consistent approach to God's redemptive plan and initiative towards people, which runs throughout his work.[25] This is not necessarily to imply that Luke suggests a change of setting but that John takes the initiative and reaches out to people. In the case of the preaching of John, such a divine initiative is even manifested in physical terms through Luke's reworking of the material to show John going to the people.

Very little is said about John's baptism.[26] In fact, in the Lukan account of the ministry of John, there is no reference to anyone being baptised by John,[27] not

[25] See Squires, Plan (1993). Green summarises the unfolding of this divine design in terms of a threefold Lukan emphasis: (1) the very existence of John and Jesus are the "consequence of divine intervention" as the realisation of the divine promises. (2) Jesus adopts God's plan and will as the core of his ministry. (3) The result of the ministries of both John and Jesus is that people are called to live their lives according to that divine purpose (Theology [1995] 28-9).

[26] There is a great variety of literature dealing with the practice of baptism by John, its origin and significance. See, Taylor, The Immerser (1997) 49-100; McKnight, Light (1991) 82-5; Webb, Baptizer and Prophet (1991) 95-216; Dahl "Baptism," (1955) 36-42.

[27] In both the other synoptic gospels there are references to people actually being baptized by John (cf. Mark 1:5; Matt 3:6), while in Luke the allusion is much more indirect. Thus, when people come to John to be baptized they receive the harsh words of John on the coming judgement (3:7-9), and as a consequence they ask what can they do (3:10-14). Then the issue moves to the messianic expectations of the people and whether it is John the forerunner of the Messiah (3:15-17). It is not until after John is arrested and put in prison (3:20) that there is a mention of people actually being baptized (3.21).

even Jesus, who is baptized when John is already in jail.[28] What is important for the reader is the fact that it is tied to μετάνοια, i.e. that John's is a baptism of repentance (for the forgiveness of sins).[29] On the basis of that connection, the relationship John builds between repentance and baptism is one of interdependence, for on the one hand John is calling people to a baptism which expresses repentance, and on the other hand people's response should be based on actual repentance. "For John baptism was not an option: the expression of repentance required baptism, and the efficacy of the baptism required repentance."[30] It is important nonetheless, to emphasis that according to John's teachings, repentance precedes baptism, the latter is meaningless without the former.

As already noted above, and in accordance with Mark 1:4, Luke defines the content of the preaching of John as of "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (3:3).[31] The question then is whether forgiveness results from baptism, as a kind of ritual washing for the removal of uncleanness, or from repentance. The latter is to be preferred on the basis that John is presented not allowing anyone to be baptized until the individual displays good fruits. If the argument presented in the Lukan text is followed, it appears that when people

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[28] We only hear in Luke that Jesus "had been baptized" (Ἰησοῦ βαπτισθέντος, 3:21), while in Mark Jesus is baptized by John (Mark 1:9), and in Matthew the intention of Jesus to be baptized by John is expressed (Matt 3:13) and after some resistance by John he baptises Jesus (3:16).

[29] Although the reference to forgiveness of sins comes from Mark, it is significantly absent in Matthew.

[30] Webb, Baptizer and Prophet (1991) 189.

[31] In Matthew the proclamation is of repentance since the kingdom is drawing near (Matt 3:2). Since Luke makes no mention of John's presently baptising anyone, what we do not find in the third gospel is what

come to John to be baptised, he warns them about baptism without good deeds. To this, in a set of verses unique to Luke (3:10-14), people react with the question about what should they do, to which John responds with instructions concerning their attitude towards their possessions and the needy. The point is that while those good works are not a reality in the individual, repentance cannot be presumed, forgiveness is thus not granted and therefore baptism is not possible. According to the preaching of John, forgiveness results from repentance shown through good deeds and not from baptism. This affirmation leads to the conclusion that those texts which include the abbreviated formula "baptism of repentance" (cf. Acts 13:24; 19:4), repentance is tantamount to "repentance for the forgiveness of sins". It is the content of his message that gives full meaning to John's baptism. Nevertheless, there is no redactional alteration at this point, since Luke keeps the text as he received it from Mark.

In contrast to Luke's historical introduction, we find that Mark introduces John's ministry in 1:2-3 with a quotation from the Old Testament (Mal 3:1 and Is 40:3), while Matthew only says "in those days" (3:1). Such biblical references as are found in Mark are not entirely absent in the other Synoptics. Matthew mentions Is 40:3 as foreshadowing the ministry of John. Luke omits Mark's reference to Mal 3:1 as an introduction to John's ministry, which he includes later (7:27) when Jesus addresses the crowd about John, after John's disciples question Jesus about whether he was the "one who was to come" (7:20). The introduction to the

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the other synoptics include concerning those who come to be baptised by John, namely, that they confess their sins (Mark 1:5; Matt 3:6).

quotation from Is 40:3-5 in Luke starts with ὡς instead of καθώς (Mark 1:2), which according to Marshall "perhaps suggests that a prophecy here finds its deliberate fulfilment rather than that a general pattern is being followed (contrast καθώς, 2:23. See Acts 13:33...)."[32] Luke also adds that the following words were written ἐν βίβλῳ λόγων of the prophet Isaiah (3:4). This addition is an emphatic element to reinforce the nexus Luke wants to build between the ministry of John and the prophetic announcement of redemption through the thematic connections with the context of Isaiah 40, namely the salvific purpose of God (Is 40:1-10; Luke 3:3, 6, 18) and the role of the prophet as conveyor of the divine words (Is 40:3, 9; Luke 3:3,4,18).[33] Thus, "Luke's narrated events are interpreted by the Isaianic vision of eschatological salvation."[34] Moreover, there is a significant alteration in the way Luke places and expands the Isaianic quotation. For Mark the purpose of using Is 40:3 is to make it an introductory statement on the activity of John as the forerunner of the Messiah. Luke, however, includes Is 40:4-5 where the goal and effect of the preaching is anticipated, namely τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (3:6).[35] "The fulfilment of the purposes of God is supremely in salvation and not in judgement."[36] This will be of great importance

[32] Luke NIGTC (1978) 136.

[33] *Contra* Evans, who thinks that the quotation from Isaiah does not take into consideration the context of that Old Testament text but it is just used to legitimise the happenings narrated in the gospels "as being 'according to the scriptures'. (...) The use here, as often elsewhere, is probably an 'atomic' one, i.e. the text is taken in isolation without regard for its original context." (Saint Luke [1990] 237).

[34] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 171.

[35] Luke however omits Is 40:5a for the glory of the Lord is not revealed, according to the third evangelist, in the earthly ministry of Jesus, otherwise characterised by suffering (24:26), but in his return (21:27).

[36] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 144.

in order to understand the words of judgement uttered by John to the crowd (3:7-17).

In addition, it is important to realise that there is a far-reaching implication in Luke's theological emphasis, namely, the inclusion of Gentiles as recipients of God's salvation. This is implied in the extended Lukan reference from Isaiah, namely, that ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (3:6). It is also a given implication that the door is open to anyone through repentance to become a son of Abraham and recipient of the promises to him for his descendants.[37]

There is also a christological emphasis related to the fact that Jesus not only brings God's salvation but that he is the saviour himself (cf. 1:69; 2:11). In vs. 3:6 we are reminded that ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ (3:6), echoing the reading of Is 40:5 from the LXX and not from the MT where "salvation" is missing. "σωτήριον, an adjective used as a noun (cf. Tit. 2:11; cf. Bar 4.24; CD 20:34), is 'the means of salvation, salvation itself' (cf. Ps 50:23 [49:23]; Is 56:1 LXX; Lk 3:6 (Is 40:5); Acts 28:28; Eph.6:17)."[38] The fact that "seen salvation" is to be interpreted as a physical reality can be supported by the words of Simeon who thanks God for having seen with his eyes God's salvation, namely, Jesus (2:30; cf. 10:23-24).[39]

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[37] The idea of raising children of Abraham from stones (3:8) clearly underlines the idea of God's salvation as the result not of an ethnically bound promise but to His solely merciful and universally embracing initiative (cf. Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 468; Nolland Luke WBC [1989] 148; Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 176).

[38] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 120.

[39] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 120.

3.4 THE PREACHING OF JOHN CHALLENGES THE CROWD (3:7-9)

As mentioned above, both Mark and Matthew speak of people being baptised after confessing their sins (Mark 1:5; Matt 3:6), while in Luke there is no reference to people actually being baptised by John. Instead, when people approach John with the intention of being baptised by him, he actually utters his eschatological message warning the crowd against an empty practice lacking basics such as repentance and its fruits, while relying on ethnic self-justifications such as Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν 'Αβραάμ (3:8). Taylor endorses the view that "John apparently rejected any notion of acquired communal or religious merit. In looking to the eschatological judgement, he pointed instead to personal responsibility".[40] Such judgmental words, after the dismissal of the self-justification of the people as "sons of Abraham", appear both in Matthew and Luke but not in Mark, thus probably deriving from their common source. Most likely John is reacting against the common Jewish belief in the "universal salvation of Israel".[41] Besides that, the link with repentance shows the need for a correct inner disposition without which baptism would be rendered ineffective (cf. 1QS 3:3-12).[42] Nolland wonders whether "the water of baptism primarily

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[40] Taylor, The Immerser (1997) 130. She finds in John's rejection of such a communal understanding of religious consciousness the basis for "Christianity's radical individualism" that Jesus has taken from John "as axiomatic in his own schema of salvation". Goodman also speaks of a qualitative turn in people's understanding of religious life towards a more individualistic perspective (Mission and Conversion [1994] 44). However, all this emphasis on the individual should be treated with caution lest we retrospectively impose a modern understanding on what "individualistic" means to the period we are dealing with.

[41] Cavallin, Life (1974) 177. He refers to MSanh 10:1 with regard to such a position within Judaism and thinks John was aware of and opposed to it.

[42] See, Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 135.

expresses repentance (as a turning away from evil – Isa 1:16-17; Jer 4:14) or the divine answer to repentance in the cleansing from sin (Ps 51:7-9; Is 4:2-6; Ezek 36:25-26, 33; 37:23; Jer 38:8; cf. *Jub.* 1:23; Rev 7:14)".[43] He favours the second on the basis of "John's active role in dispensing baptism" and "the parallel with Christian baptism (see Acts 22:16)" so that "the connection between baptism and forgiveness of sins is thus to be understood in relation to the OT imagery of a divine washing".[44]

Two brief comments on this question are required. First, if Luke keeps up with the general context of repentance in Isaiah, there we also find references to repentance as an expected initiative of people toward their sins, as Nolland himself has already acknowledged. It should not be forgotten that Is 1:10-20 speaks against an empty religious ritual practised by the people, which is rejected by God, while repentance is the proper and expected answer, shown in ethical terms. Second, there is no need to create such a dichotomy, for both understandings can be present, namely, repentance as a divine gift and action (Acts 5:31; 11:18; cf., Is 4:2-6) and as the appropriate response from people to the divine message (Luke 3:8; Is 1:16-17). This accords with Luke's emphasis on divine initiative and the due response expected from the people.

In Mark there are no hostile comments coming from John, in contrast to those made in Matt 3:7 against the Pharisees and the Sadducees, or against the

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[43] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 141.

[44] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 141.

multitudes as in Luke 3:7, when they come to be baptised by John. Thus, one should think of a common source used by both Matthew and Luke, which one of the two has altered.[45] Luke is probably using the term ὁ ὄχλος (as also later ὁ λαός is used in a similar way; cf., 3:15, 18) as a general way of describing the people approaching John. Or perhaps Luke omits the Pharisees and Sadducees mentioned in Matt 3:7, whom he exchanges for the multitude (3:7). There is no clear answer to the question since there are elements which suggest that the changes might have occurred either way. It may be that it is Matthew who made the change from *Q*, given his consistency in portraying these two groups as showing resistance to the preaching of Jesus (Matt 16:1, 6, 11-12), which would lead the author of Matthew to think of them as the possible targets of John's harsh words.[46] However, it is possible that it was Luke who made the change, given the mention of "brood of vipers", probably more suitable as a critique of the Pharisees than of the crowds,[47] and also given the universal emphasis elsewhere in Luke, as also in this text, which would require a broad concept such as ὁ ὄχλος.

Such a hostile style in the ministry of John as that suggested by Luke indicates a higher level of conflict here than in the other Synoptics, since, in Mark, there is no sign of conflict and in Matthew, only with the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Luke it is against the people in general. Fitzmyer sees an element of irony in the

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[45] Nolland shows that Matt 3:7-10, out of 63 words 60 appear in Luke 3:7-9, despite different introductions to them (Luke WBC [1989] 146).

[46] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 139.

[47] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 467.

situation since the preaching is intended to call people to a God and to a faith they already claim to profess.[48] The terms of the conflict are the result of the clash between John's preaching of repentance baptism, which must be endorsed by corresponding good deeds, and the assumption of what seems to be a very complacent approach to religious identity. The emphasis in John's preaching on the necessity of good deeds (cf. 3:18) will later reach its highest point in the confrontation with Herod the Tetrarch, which results in John's imprisonment (3:19-20). In a similar fashion to the story of John we have the story of Zacchaeus, whose response to divine salvation is spelled out in ethical terms, in contrast with the general view of people claiming to be sons of Abraham (19:1-10). The ethnic claim on Abraham by the people is compared to a tree not bearing good fruit (3:9). It is not that the promises to Abraham are no longer valid (1:54-5; 72-3), but that the approach of people to them has become sterile and empty (13:16; 16:19-31). The message is thus that the eschatological judgement is avoided, or salvation is attained as the result of repentance, which is shown through ethical deeds by which the ritual, namely baptism, becomes meaningful.

The harsh words of John directed to the crowds (3:7-9) might again seem to imply an attitude of resistance to his teaching but by larger numbers than in Matthew, since in Luke it is the crowds who receive such condemnation. However, another explanation is probable since Luke consistently presents the

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[48] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 465.

people as sympathetic to the teaching of John. Luke 7:29-30 stands alone with Matthew in portraying the Pharisees and teachers of the Law as rejecting the baptism of John, while it found acceptance in the people. When the priests and Sadducees in the temple question Jesus' authority, he answers them with a question on John's baptism, which these religious figures do not dare to deny for fear of the people who considered him a prophet (20:6). Why, then, are the crowds singled out by John's words? Nolland gives some room for the possibility that a first reaction may well be one of scepticism due to the large positive response, if John would have been up until now a member of a small and semi-isolated Essene desert community.[49] But most likely the reference to the crowds is the result of the theological interest of Luke, concerned with the universal scope and need of repentance (cf. 13:1-5). In the context of eschatological judgement, a single norm applies to all, namely, that without repentance they all are in a hopeless position before God's judgement.[50] Marshall even considers what we could call a "homiletic resource", since such general and harsh words might have been intended to awake a reaction in the crowd "to a sense of the realities of the situation",[51] (ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀξίνη πρὸς τὴν ῥίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται, 3:9). Nor can we forgot the general assumptions and implications Jewish people drew from their ethnic identity (Πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν 'Αβραάμ, 3:8), which John reminds them are of no help, unless they repent.[52]

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[49] Nolland Luke WBC (1989) 149.

[50] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 175.

[51] Luke NIGTC (1978) 139.

[52] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 465.

3.5 "WHAT SHALL WE DO?" (3:10-14)

Verses 10-14 only appear in Luke, emphasising the ethical dimension of John's preaching.[53] It is material probably coming from *Q*, and not from *L*, which Matthew omits. The reason for such a position is the lack of material on John in *L*.[54] In these verses, John is found in dialogue with the crowds, of whom two groups are mentioned, namely, toll collectors and soldiers. Such an interaction is the result of the expected response of the people to the divine salvific initiative manifested through the preaching of John.

A positive element in favour of the crowds is their response to the preaching of John, expressed by their question to him Τί οὖν ποιήσωμεν; (3:10), which then provokes John's ethical demands as a means of demonstrating their repentance. The positive attitude of the crowds becomes even more evident in the two groups that Luke mentions as responding to the preaching of John, namely, the toll collectors and the soldiers. It is a Lukan characteristic to present Jesus welcoming toll collectors and sinners into his fellowship[55] and, in turn, these people are depicted as sensitive and positively responding to the preaching of both John and Jesus. Thus, we find the story of the calling of Levi the toll collector who leaves everything to follow Jesus' call (5:27-32). When Jesus speaks to the people about John, the reaction is that they repent, including toll

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[53] Nolland Luke WBC (1989) 146.

[54] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 142; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 464.

[55] In Moxnes' terms, toll collectors and sinners "had set themselves apart from the community" and "were considered unclean" (Economy of the Kingdom [1988] 54).

collectors (7:29). The parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector portrays the latter as the one justified before God (18:9-14). Zacchaeus, a chief toll collector, is the final example of repentance in the travel narrative (19:1-10). A common element in most of these stories is that repentance takes the form of or is manifested by an ethical response affecting (toll collectors') possessions (cf. 3:13; 5:27-32; 19:1-10).

With regard to toll collectors, they "were cordially hated and despised by their fellow-countrymen and, in addition, their jobs made them ritually unclean."[56] According to Wright, it is a general misunderstanding to make toll collectors work for the Romans when monies were collected for king Herod, nonetheless a king very much-disliked by the people as well.[57] However, even if it is to be understood in an indirect manner, the charge of collaborating with the Romans is not completely off target since collecting taxes for Herod was, in effect, also collecting them for Rome as the king had to pay tributes to Rome.[58] It was the Jewish people and not the toll collectors who paid the taxes. The toll collectors had to pay in advance for the right to collect taxes in a given area, so that their profit would come from the extra commissions charged on them. This system was obviously open to abuse, since the higher the bid for the right to collect the taxes, the higher the commissions charged. Furthermore, since it is the task of the

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[56] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 143.

[57] Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God (1996) 266. For further reading on the Jewish taxation system of the time, see, Schmidt, "Taxation, Jewish," (2000) 1163-6.

[58] Sanders, Historical Figure of Jesus (1993) 228-9, although he states his present uneasiness at this point. He recalls Josephus' story of a Jewish customs officer named John of Caesarea who bribed a Roman procurator to settle a dispute over construction work blocking access to a synagogue (*Bell* II.285-8).

toll collector to assess the value of the goods to be taxed, abusive dues could easily be demanded.[59] Thus, the way Luke characterises image of toll collectors presented in Luke, even if it is perhaps a little elaborated, corresponds with a widespread perception of these people at the time. "They were", Sanders concludes, "'wicked'."[60]

There is little that may help us to determine clearly who the soldiers mentioned here were. Ruling out the possibility that they were Roman soldiers,[61] they could have been soldiers in Herod's army,[62] "Jewish auxiliaries used in Judaea for police duties",[63] who according to Thompson, were also used as part of the Roman military units when needed.[64] There is also the possibility that these soldiers were "police assigned to protect tax collectors"[65] thus participating in the same corrupt actions of the toll collectors they protected. This is at least the implication of John's words to them, that they should not collect more than what they have to (3:14). Their connection with extortion places them outside the limits of acceptable social norms. It is in the dialogue between John and these groups of people that Luke portrays his emphasis on divine initiative towards

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[59] Schmidt, "Taxation, Jewish," (2000) 1165.

[60] Sanders, Historical Figure of Jesus (1993) 229.

[61] Fitzmyer reminds us "there were no legions stationed in Palestine in this time, nor auxiliaries from other provinces" (Luke AB [1981] 470). Therefore, there is no room for Bultmann's rejection of the authenticity of the text because he could not foresee Roman soldiers "on a pilgrimage" to John (Synoptic Tradition [1963] 145), since after all these were a Jewish militia.

[62] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 143; Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 241.

[63] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 143.

[64] Auxiliaries were "recruited from the provinces, initially remaining as ethnic units and stationed in their areas of origin" (Thompson, "Roman Military," [2000] 994).

[65] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 150; cf., Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 92; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 143.

those who leading socio-religious ruling groups despise. The ministry of John is, consequently, presented without the constraints of such given values and offers his universal message of repentance to all. In turn, the seemingly positive attitude of these groups towards the preaching of John anticipates what is going to be major issue in the Lukan depiction of the ministry of Jesus, namely, the positive response to it by those on the fringes of socio-religious acceptability. The fact that people considered as social insiders are not mentioned as compelled by the preaching of John also reveals what is going to be a conflict-causing consequence of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom, namely, status reversal. Thus, according to the values of the kingdom, the insiders will become outsiders and outsiders insiders for, in Luke, those generally seen as outcasts are presented as repenting while the socio-religious insiders, mainly people with high status and power, are shown as opposing the ministry of Jesus.

3.6 THE SAVING MESSIAH (3:15-17)

John is identified by the crowds as the Messiah (3:15, cf., 9:18-20),[66] something he denies, admittedly not in such direct terms as in the gospel of John (Ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ Χριστός, 1:20), but nonetheless sufficiently clearly. He does this by means of his comments on Jesus such as "one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the

[66] Such identification is also "evoked" in the readers since Luke presents the two characters in similar fashion. See, Evans (Saint Luke [1990] 228) for a detailed presentation of the parallelisms.

Holy Spirit and fire" (3:16). Thus, the Messiah is stronger than John, since he is the eschatological character whose "winnowing fork is in his hand" (3:17) and thus the one executing judgement;[67] he holds higher status than John;[68] his superiority is also evident in his baptism ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί (3:16). A final element in that relationship is the fact that it is not until Luke has finished with the presentation of John's ministry, going as far as his imprisonment (3:20), that we hear of the ministry of Jesus, which starts with his baptism. Luke omits the fact that Jesus is baptised by John (3:21; cf. Mark 1:9; Matt 3:13) for he is already in prison. The fact that in 3:21 we find Jesus participating in the same baptism as τόν λαόν, which applies to the crowds referred to in 3:7, implies that "Jesus at least shares in John's baptism".[69] Luke omits John's name to separate the spheres of the two ministries, that of Jesus already belonging "to the period of fulfilment."[70] The ministry of John does not only prepare the way of the Lord, but also culminates and fades with the public appearing of the coming Messiah. Once "the Messiah had come, there was no place for the ministry of the forerunner."[71] Thus, the importance of the role of John is that of being the precursor of the Messiah, although subordinate to him.

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[67] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 466.

[68] Green refers to rabbinical discussions to affirm that the action John was not worthy of doing, namely "to untie the thong of his sandal" refers to "slave-master relations, cf. *b. Sanh* 62b; *b. Qidd.* 22b; *b Pesah.* 4a; et al." (Luke NICNT [1997] 180 n.73), another element which emphasises the superior status of Jesus.

[69] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 483.

[70] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 483.

[71] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 150.

The connection of John's preaching with the Messiah is introduced straightforwardly both in Mark and Matthew as a part of the preaching of John, while in Luke the connection arises in the minds of the people, who then ask John whether he is the Christ (3:15-16). The fact that, according to Luke, people[72] see a connection between John and the expected Messiah[73] reduces the harsh effect of the words of John to the crowd, introducing an element of hope.[74] It is now that the effect of the judgement can be reversed. Even though "the axe is lying at the root of the trees" (3:9), the hope of avoiding such a situation is open through heeding John's warning to: "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (3:8), but not through any claim on Abraham's lineage.

Luke refers to the Messiah as someone coming, but in contrast to both Mark and Matthew he suppresses the words ὀπίσω μου (Mark 1:7, cf., Matt 3:11) to avoid any possible inference of a lower role of the Messiah with regard to John, namely, as one of his disciples.[75] The coming One will baptise with Holy Spirit and fire (3:16; cf., Matt 3:11).[76] There is no such mention of fire in Mark. There is, thus, a contrast established between John's baptism, with water, and that of

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[72] Marshall thinks that the change in v. 15 from ὄχλος to λαός "may reflect Luke's concept of the Jewish people as a religious body looking for the coming of the Messiah" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 145).

[73] It is only in the third gospel that we find this question coming from the people linking John with the Messiah. In John's gospel what we find is the Pharisees questioning John's baptism, if after all he is "neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet" (John 1:24-25).

[74] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 180.

[75] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 472.

[76] Literature on this text: Best, "Spirit," (1960) 236-43; Brown, "Water," (1960) 292-8; Alonso, "Bautismo," (1965) 319-31; Dunn, "Spirit-and-Fire," (1972) 81-92; Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 243; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 473-4; Flowers, "Holy Ghost," (1952-3) 155-6; Glasson, "Orphic," (1956-7) 69-71; Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 180-2; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 145-8; Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 151-3; Patzia, "Preached?" (1968) 21-7.

the Messiah, with Holy Spirit and fire, which does not necessarily imply opposition or contradiction between the two. Fitzmyer, on the basis of a text from The Manual of Discipline from Qumran (1QS 4:20-21), draws a helpful contextual parallel which provides a plausible element of continuity between John's and the Messiah's baptisms, since "water", "Holy Spirit" and "fire" are means by which God cleanses and purifies his people.[77] Nevertheless, in the words of John as they are referred to in Acts 1:5 the allusion to fire is missing.[78]

Thus it can be argued that in the juxtaposition of Holy Spirit and fire in John's words are present the twofold consequences of the coming judgement, namely, that the evil doers will be condemned, thus the reference to the burning chaff, while those who repent will be saved. This duality will continue appearing in Luke's presentation of the twofold attitude towards the ministry of Jesus between those who accept it and those who reject and oppose it.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this first study of a conversion text in the third gospel, Luke's account of the preaching of John the Baptist has been analysed. The main redactional emphases have been the following: the historical introduction to the narrative included in

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[77] Fitzmyer, Luke (1981) 474.

[78] It is also important to look to the other similar instances in Luke where we find a reference to fire (9:54; 12:49; 17:29). All three of them are related to judgement, although 9:54 and 17:29 refer to Old Testament situations where condemnation to destruction by fire is the result of divine judgement upon people (2 Kings 1:9-16; Gen 19:24-25). More relevant to our text is 12:49-53 where we find a context of coming judgement and of fire not just as carrying out the destruction, thus affecting only the wicked, but also affecting the righteous ones as a means of division or setting them aside from the wicked ones. Therefore,

order to set God's saving activity against the background of human history (3:1-2), the insertion of other scriptural references to emphasize the universality of God's offer of salvation (3:6), the inclusion of the dialogue between John and some of the groups responding to his preaching in order to highlight who these people are and how repentance must be shown through good deeds (3:10-14) and, finally, the question of the relationship between John and the coming Messiah. This last adds a hopeful tone to the prospects of an eschatological judgement (3:15).

In the Lukan infancy narrative, the scope of John's ministry is defined in terms of salvation and conversion and, in the section on his preaching ministry, he is introduced like one of the Old Testament prophets. He is the one to announce the coming judgement to be brought about by the coming of God's Messiah. This eschatological announcement of judgement aims, nonetheless, at redemption (1:16-17). The core of John's preaching is a baptism of repentance (7:29) and the expected response is conversion, namely, a turning in people's lives towards God (1:16-17). Such a conversion becomes authentic and visible in a proper life style, something those in power seem to reject (1:51-53; 7:30). The full scope of salvation is not limited to Jewish people but is open to "all flesh" (1:55, 73) because God's promises to Abraham are not limited by race, since "God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (3:8).

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it can be implied that the baptism of Holy Spirit is confined to those who repent as a distinctive mark of their conversion.

Concerning the search for a possible paradigm of conversion, some elements are present in the narrative of John's preaching that resonate with other similar instances in Luke. Thus the calling and itinerant ministry of John reveals God's salvific initiative, especially towards those despised by people of the predominant socio-religious strata. In fact, the mention of political and religious figures at the beginning of the account is not a neutral source of information for it is people from those groups that are consistently portrayed elsewhere in Luke as the ones opposing and rejecting the ministry of Jesus. Therefore, forthcoming conflicts are already inferred. It is in the reference to toll collectors that we find those who, because of their dishonesty, were often regarded as sinners and rejected by those following conventional socio-religious values (cf. 5:30; 7:34; 15:1; 18:13; 19:7). Nonetheless, we have established Luke's insistence that repentance is required from all, signalled by a corresponding ethical attitude, especially in the way possessions are dealt with in relation to others, particularly those in need. It is those who repent who will escape condemnation at the eschatological judgement and attain forgiveness. The soteriological character of the One bringing eschatological judgement is evidenced in the goal of his coming, in the universal aim of the divine plan that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (3:6).

4. THE CONVERSION OF LEVI (Luke 5:27-32)

4. 1 INTRODUCTION

The story of the conversion of Levi is the first occasion on which Jesus, the Pharisees and toll collectors and/or sinners come together in the same narrative. The initiative of Jesus in approaching Levi and inviting him to join his group becomes a scandal for the Pharisees. The atmosphere of conflict is already provided in the Lukan co-texts to this story. Thus, the synagogue becomes a frequent location in which such conflicts take place.[1] To the reactions of surprise at his programmatic discourse (4:18-19, 21), Jesus answers that there is no prophet without honour except in his own land, and as the result of these words "all in the synagogue were filled with rage" (ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες θυμοῦ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ) and tried to kill him (4:28-30). There are also two occasions on which Jesus is accused of breaking the Sabbath, the first when he heals a paralytic (5:17-26) and the second when his disciples pluck heads of grain (6:1-5). On both occasions accusations are made against him of blasphemy (5:21)

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[1] Although 4:15 says about all praising Jesus' teaching in the synagogues of Galilee and in 4:36 his words provoke amazement, on other occasions when Jesus is depicted teaching in the synagogue, the outcome is described in terms of rage (θυμός, 4:28), fury (ἄνοια, 6:11) and indignation (ἀγανακτέω, 13:14), with people either trying to kill him (4:29) or plotting against him (6:7,11). On those occasions on which there is a hostile attitude towards Jesus, those showing such hostility are contrasted with those acting the opposite way. Thus, if the programmatic words of Jesus at the synagogue in Nazareth provoke the rage of all those present, it is because their negative attitude towards Jesus has been compared with the positive one of the people of Capernaum (4:23). The Pharisees and the scribes are singled out as the ones trying to find fault in Jesus' actions to accuse him (6:7) and it is the leader of the synagogue who articulates the opposition to Jesus after he heals the man with the withered hand. With Jesus' response to the leader of the synagogue, his opponents are put to shame while all of the people marvelled at his actions (13:17). Therefore, these "synagogue-conflict accounts" convey one of Luke's main emphases, namely, the twofold response to the divine initiative displayed in Jesus' ministry, the negative ones corresponding to those in leading positions and the positive ones to people generally considered as sinners and socio-religious outsiders.

and breaking the law (6:2), respectively. It is the accusations against Jesus which provide the ground for the assertion of the authority of the Son of Man both to forgive sins (5:24) and as Lord of the Sabbath (6:5).

Furthermore, in the story of the healing of the paralytic, the first round of the conflict between Jesus and Pharisees is one of many that Luke recounts in his gospel.[2] It will be shown below that Luke portrays this conflict as being over the way Jesus offers forgiveness and salvation and in how Levi shows his repentance. Neale interprets "conflict" as essential to the gospel genre, "no conflict, no Gospel story".[3] Beyond any literary, social, or economic rationale, he continues arguing that the reason why Pharisees are categorised in such a negative fashion is that it is necessary to keep up the sense of an inevitable conflict. In a different manner, Byrne speaks of "a 'triangular' situation" recurrent in Luke involving Jesus, the other main character and "a 'they' who observe and comment".[4] The acceptance of or resistance to the ministry of Jesus marks the differences between the two parties involved. Therefore, the interaction between Jesus and Levi is the core of the argument in the present account for it becomes unacceptable to the religious values and categories that characterise the Lukan Pharisees, hence the conflict.

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[2] Marshall shows that in 5:12-6:11 alone there are six different controversies taking place between Jesus and the Pharisees. Such controversies are taken from Mark, "but in Lk. there is somewhat more stress on the positive aspects of Jesus' ministry which led to the opposition" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 206).

[3] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 108.

[4] Byrne, Hospitality of God (2000) 5.

4.2 THE CALL TO CONVERSION (5:27-28)

The action of the story is introduced in a typically Lukan way, with καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα, a form only used in the synoptics by Luke,[5] as a means of distinguishing what follows from what precedes. However, although there is a change of scenario from the house in which Jesus healed the paralytic (5:17-26) to the outdoor place, the already established controversy and conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in that previous story continues unaltered.

The description of the person Jesus sees and calls after leaving the place in which he healed a paralytic shows Luke's redactional work (5:27). Thus, the very action of Jesus' seeing is changed from the simple verb εἶδον (Mark 2:14; cf. Matt 9:9) to the more explicit θεάομαι, probably to single out the person of Levi. Levi's identification is not on the basis of his lineage (Mark 2:14) nor, perhaps, as one of the Twelve, as the use of Matthew instead of Levi may imply (Matt 9:9), but on the basis of his office as toll collector (τελώνης). In fact, Luke reiterates the importance of Levi's office by accentuating, in another unique Lukan insertion, that Jesus first of all sees a toll collector (ἐθεάσατο τελώνην) as well as the mentioning his sitting at the toll office (καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον, Luke 5:27; cf. Mark 2:14; Matt 9:9). In addition, the way Levi is introduced contrasts with the way John the Baptist is presented, the latter with the formula "son of" (τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱὸν, 3:2) in order to introduce him in

[5] As in 10:1; cf. 17:8, 18:4. See, Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 244.

similar fashion to one of the Old Testament prophets, and the former with the removal of the, for Luke, "irrelevant" family reference appearing in the other synoptics. In turn, Luke adds a second reference to Levi's office as toll collector, a portrayal he wants to emphasize in order to accentuate the different characterizations at work in the story.

This Lukan interest in Levi's office is not without significance. As already shown in the study of the preaching of John the Baptist (3:1-17), toll collectors were among the most sensitive, responding positively to the message of the Kingdom, even though the associations such an occupation carried might suggest otherwise.[6] In the Mishnah there are two instances in which toll collectors are negatively referred to together with murderers and robbers[7] and on a third occasion it is said that "if tax-gatherers entered a house [all that is within it] becomes unclean".[8] These allusions corroborate the negative views about toll collectors portrayed in the third gospel. They are people socially despised and in a constant state of uncleanness. This is certainly how Luke characterizes the Pharisees' perceptions and attitudes towards them based on their concern for ritual purity even in the household, so that they reprove Jesus' fellowship with toll collectors.

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[6] Michel, "τελώνης," TDNT 8.101-3.

[7] *m. Ned.* 3:4; *m. B. Qam.* 10:2. In the Talmud, "tax collectors and publicans" are named among despised occupations on the suspicion of collecting more "than the legally imposed tax" (*b. Sanh.* 25b). There are also similar references in Greco-Roman literature to the grouping of toll collectors with despised people such as robbers and thieves. See, Cicero, *De offic.* 15–51; Diogenes Cynicus, *Ep.* 36.2; Lucan, *Pseudolog.* 30; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 14.14.

[8] *m. Tohar.* 7:6.

The invitation of Jesus to "follow" him is common in the gospels as an expression of discipleship.[9] In relation to discipleship, the term ἀκολουθεῖν reflects the relationship between a disciple and his master[10] without any theological connotations being implied in the concept.[11] However, such a general use of the term is replaced by a more distinctive use in the New Testament, related to the following of (Jesus) Christ. Such a relationship between Jesus and his disciples often has, as its first step, an abandoning of all possessions and kinship (Luke 5:11, 28; 18:28). This signified not only the external but also the internal commitment to and identification with Jesus' life and fate (Luke 9:57-58);[12] in other words, a conversion. "The exclusiveness of the NT use arises from the fact that, for primitive Christianity, there was only one discipleship and therefore only one following, namely the relationship to Jesus,"[13] a relation which is a manifestation of God's salvation (cf. Luke 18:18-30). Luke presents such a following with a concept of being "on the move" in Jesus' language.[14] Last but not least, given the particularly Christian nuance, following Jesus conveys also the idea of partaking in his suffering and destiny,

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[9] Cf. Mark 2:14; 6:1; 8:34; 10:21; Matt 8:19, 22; 9:9; 10:38; 16:24; 19:21, 28; Luke 5:27; 9:23, 49, 57, 59, 61; 18:22; John 1:40, 43; 8:12; 10:4, 27; 12:26; 21:19, 22.

[10] The disciple following the teachings of the master, for example. Other uses of ἀκολουθεῖν at the time: Josephus, *Ant.* VIII.354; CD 4:19, 19:32.

[11] Kittel, "ἀκολουθεῖν," TDNT 1.213. Not even the Old Testament translation הָלַךְ אַחֲרֵי, bears the theological connotations that the term does in the New Testament. Probably because "it is used as a technical term for apostasy into heathenism. Going after other gods is the basic sin of the people and the cause of all visitations, Ju. 2:12; Dt. 4:3; 6:14; 1K. 21:26; Jer. 11:10 etc." Kittel, "ἀκολουθεῖν," TDNT 1.211.

[12] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 241-2.

[13] Kittel, "ἀκολουθεῖν," TDNT 1.214.

[14] It is shown both in the language, (i.e. the Christian community is defined by Luke as "the Way", but nowhere else in the New Testament [Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; cf. other variants Acts 16:17; 18:25-26]), and in the geographical interest of Luke (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 242-3).

with clear eschatological connotations (9:23-24).[15] Thus, the first element in the presentation of the conversion of Levi comes from Jesus' own invitation to follow him, or to put it differently, an invitation to the Kingdom of God. The fact that Luke distinctively emphasises that the call is made to a toll collector corresponds to the important place the divine initiative at work in Jesus' ministry takes in his theological scheme, especially towards those at the fringe of wider socio-religious acceptability. Toll collectors become those to whom Jesus offers fellowship even though they are socio-religious outsiders, which provokes the objection of the Pharisees and their scribes (5:30).

The response of Levi to Jesus' call is without delay, since he gets up and leaving everything follows him (5:28).[16] Luke is the only evangelist mentioning the fact that Levi left everything behind, an addition that serves the purpose of reinforcing the determination of Levi's decision. It shows the break he is making with his actual way of living in order to follow Jesus' way.[17] In the light of Jesus' response to the Pharisees' criticism of his welcoming of Levi, namely, that he has come to call sinners to repentance, the fact that Levi leaves everything as a response to Jesus' call must be read as a sign or indication of his repentance. It is a Lukan feature to show the change of allegiance towards God via a change in attitude towards wealth.[18] Along these

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[15] Bovon, Saint Luc (1991) 251; Kittel, "ἀκολουθεῖν," TDNT 1.214.

[16] Gill, Life on the Road (1989) 41.

[17] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 219.

[18] Green affirms that in Luke's gospel the issue is neither that "wealth is inherently bad, nor that poverty is inherently good" but that they can become "obstacles to obedience to the divine mission"

lines, the disciples attempt to vindicate themselves since they have left everything to follow Jesus, in contrast with the ruler whose clinging to wealth prevents him from becoming a disciple himself (18:18-30). Another toll collector, Zacchaeus, asserts his new allegiance by means of giving half of his wealth to the poor and paying restitution to those he may have defrauded (19:8).

It is not necessary to assume that Levi becomes financially poor after his decision to follow Jesus, since he can celebrate a large banquet in his house hosting many guests (5:29). However, regardless of Levi's own wealth, from a sociological point of view he is "poor" in as much as his wealth does not provide him with honour before those of the leading socio-religious strata, since some of them consider him a "sinner" (5:30) and therefore a social outcast. As Green points out, "the level of one's wealth was of little consequence except in so far as that wealth might be translated into status".[19] Thus, it can be inferred that the main element of failure that Luke sees in Levi is his dishonesty with regard to money collection (cf. 3:12-13). In this story, the question is not wealth *per se* but its role in the society's evaluation of an individual. From this perspective, Luke makes the most in his gospel of the dichotomy between serving God and serving mammon (μαμῶνας, cf. 16:13-

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(Theology [1995] 148). In the story of Levi, continuing his actual strife for wealth would have made his following of Jesus impossible.

[19] Green, "Good News to Whom?" (1994) 64. The article itself is an excellent study of the meaning of the word "poor" in Luke, which shows its further implications beyond material connotations into its social nuances. See also the works of R. Duncan-Jones, The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; and E. A. Judge, Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St. Paul *UCP* 29. Canterbury: University of Canterbury, 1982.

15). As Moxnes has shown, wealth has a moral dimension, which at its worst brings about a conflict of loyalty with that due to God.[20] Thus, with his action Levi is demonstrating his renunciation of his previous loyalty and aligning himself with God. By adding that he has left everything to follow Jesus, Luke intends to convey Levi's repentance.

4.3 CELEBRATING REPENTANCE (5:29)

To refer to Levi's following of Jesus, Luke changes Mark's aorist ἠκολούθησεν for the imperfect ἠκολούθει (5:28) "probably to indicate that what comes next is an expression of Levi's following"[21] so that the great feast is clearly linked to what has happened before, namely, Levi's repentance. Jesus is the main guest at the party since the banquet is given in his honour (5:29).[22] Once again, it may seem a contradiction of terms to affirm both that Levi has left everything to follow Jesus and that he makes a great feast in his house as the result of that. Nor should the matter be reduced to a merely rhetorical emphasis. Fitzmyer points out that trying to solve the apparent contradiction "is to miss the whole point of the passage. To ask it is to spoil the story!"[23] Nevertheless, there is no contradiction in Luke's perspective if the right question is asked of the text.

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[20] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 145.

[21] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 245.

[22] From the perspective of the social sciences, that Jesus is present at the banquet indicates that Levi is reciprocating Jesus' bestowal of a "call" upon him. It is no surprise then, that in the following verses, Luke puts Jesus in the role of the bridegroom (5:33-35), therefore of the host, or in the parables of the Great Banquet in 14:1-24, in which the role of the host in the parables matches Jesus' eschatological teaching and ministry.

[23] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 589.

It is important to realise that, for Luke, the question is not one of becoming financially indigent but the right mastering of possessions, which he describes as "mammon" "an almost hypostatized power with respect to which one can never remain ambivalent, neutral, or passive."[24] Therefore it must be mastered so that it does not become a master itself.[25] Once again, the moral dimension of wealth comes to the front,[26] since at a time of limited resources[27] peasant societies do not envisage an increase in the existing resources so that any "increase in goods for one person always is at the expense of others."[28] Possessions were not just a matter of subsistence but also of social relationships. By subsistence should be understood not only escaping starvation but also being able to keep up with social interactions and accountability.[29] Thus, breaking the *status quo*[30] would be considered as a threat to one's own subsistence, and that could well be one of the allegations against toll collectors, namely, that by their charging more than was due they endangered people's subsistence. Under this perspective, what Levi's leaving "everything" indicates

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[24] Green, Theology (1995) 148.

[25] Green, Theology (1995) 148.

[26] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 145.

[27] Foster, "Limited Good," (1965) 293-315. Also, Malina, Social Gospel (2001) 104-5.

[28] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 145. Malina argues in similar ways contending that any increase in valuable possessions is made at other people's expense, which leads to a negative perception of wealth in people (Social Gospel [2001] 104-5).

[29] By subsistence, Moxnes means "what is needed for a household to be a fully functioning member of a village society. It includes food, clothes, housing, but also resources to cover social and ceremonial obligations, for instance hospitality, tithes, and offerings." (Economy of the Kingdom [1988] 174). He affirms that it is not the "market and profit" but subsistence which is the overriding force of peasant economies and societies (80).

[30] MacMullen speaks of the "conservatism" of the villagers, since any attempt at change may put to risk their already fragile subsistence (Roman Social Relations [1974] 27).

is not that he joins the destitute, but the fact that his life changes loyalties from "mammon" to God.

As already stated above, Luke links the decision of Levi to obey Jesus' call to follow him with the subsequent δοχή,[31] a uniquely Lukan term in the New Testament, used here and in 14:13. In contrast to Mark's ambiguity as to whether the host of the dinner is Jesus or Levi, Luke makes it clear that the feast takes place at the house of Levi (5:29). Table-fellowship is a major Lukan emphasis[32] and interest has recently risen in the topic.[33] Social structures are also evident in the celebration of meals. For example, in the Roman setting meals were important in the life of the collegia. The first would be the collegium of professionals or different kinds of business people. The second group was the *collegia sodalicia*, which would gather worshippers of a given deity. The *collegia tenuiorum* was the third group, in which poor people would provide themselves a decent burial. All *collegia* had one thing in common, namely, the collective meal.[34] Also important from a literary perspective is the

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[31] The term also appears in the LXX, in Gen 21:8; 26:30; Est 1:3; 5:4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15; Dan 5:1.

[32] See 4:38-39; 7:36-50; 9:10-17; 10:38-52; 11:37-54; 14:1-24; 15:1-2; 19:1-10; 22:4-38; 24:29-32, 41-43.

[33] Cf. Neyrey, J. H. "Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship," The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1991, 361-87; McMahan, C. T. Meals as Type-Scenes in the Gospel of Luke. (Unpublished Dissertation) Louisville, Kentucky: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987; Smith, D. E. "Table Fellowship as a Literary Motif in the Gospel of Luke," JBL 106 (1987) 613-38; Esler, P. F. "Table Fellowship," Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts. The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 71-109; Moxnes, "Meals and the New Community," (1986-7) 158-67; Karris, R. J. Luke: Artist and Theologian. Luke's Passion Account as Literature. New York: Paulist Press, 1985, ch. 4; Steele III, E. P. Jesus' Table-Fellowship with Pharisees: An Editorial Analysis of Luke 7:36-50; 11:37-54; 14:1-24. (Unpublished dissertation). Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1981.

[34] Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment (1986) 124-6.

genre known as *symposium*. A symposium would develop around the table, in the form of dialogues ("table talks") or discourses.[35] Behind these gatherings there is also the implied understanding of meals as a means of fellowship, of unity, and of inclusiveness just as much as they are a means of separation and exclusiveness, since meals "symbolize proper behavior among social groups in relation to one another and in relation to God. Who may eat with whom is a direct expression of social, political and religious relations."[36]

The three references to meals where Jesus is depicted at table with toll collectors and sinners in Luke (5:27-32; 15:1-2; 19:1-10) have in common some distinctive elements. Thus we have Jesus and toll collectors and/or sinners at table (5:29; 15:1; 19:5), which is the result of the positive response to Jesus' calling from such groups (5:29; 15:1; 19:6). Such a situation provokes the grumbling of the Pharisees (5:30; 15:2; 19:7) which is answered by a soteriological statement from Jesus (5:32; 15:7; 19:9). Thus, the use of table fellowship as the framework of the story of Levi helps Luke to emphasize the salvation offered by Jesus to people like the toll collectors and therefore their inclusion among his disciples, even though they are seen as social outcasts and outsiders by religious groups like the Pharisees. For the latter, the interpretation of Levi's and Jesus' table fellowship as a means of showing and acknowledging repentance is also problematic. "In the judgement of the

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[35] For other examples of the use of this literary genre, see Plato's Symposium and Plutarch's Dinner of the Seven Wise Men.

[36] Feeley-Harnik, The Lord's Table (1981) 2; cf. Douglas, Implicit Meanings (1975) 249, in which food is interpreted as a code of social relationships and interactions.

Pharisees (and presumably of John's disciples) frequent fasting and prayers would be a better expression of repentance"[37] while for Jesus and his disciples it leads to rather a large and joyful banquet.[38] As Saldarini states, "food rules are determinative for the behavior and identity of groups within Judaism".[39] Among the various motifs linked to the practice of fasting in Judaism, it was associated with repentance (cf. 1 Kgs 21:27; Isa 58:1-9; Joel 1:14; 2:15-27) or penitence (cf. Lev 16:29-31) over sin, hence the surprise of the Pharisees who according to Luke are overzealous in the observance of fasting.[40] If the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees following the account of Levi's conversion clarifies the issue somewhat, it is on the basis of a christological emphasis. It is now Jesus who becomes the criterion for the new practice, "you cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them" (5:34).[41] Jesus' presence and salvific ministry call for joy and not for fasting since the eschatological hope of salvation is already present in him. The economy of the Kingdom that Jesus advances brings a new reality that is approached and

[37] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 242.

[38] Nolland assumes a cheerful context, since "banquets are a traditional expression of joy" (Luke WBC [1989] 242) and that is the reason for this one. There is also the emphasis on joy by Luke as expression of the salvation experience; cf. Morrice, Joy (1984) 68.

[39] Saldarini, Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees (1988) 168-9.

[40] In the parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector, the former says that he fasts twice per week (18:9-14). In the controversy over the attitude of Jesus' disciples over their lack of observance of fasting, they are contrasted with the disciples of the Pharisees and also with those of John the Baptist who are said to fast frequently (5:33).

[41] Nonetheless, the emphasis of the story is not that the observance of fasting is abolished but postponed.

manifested differently.[42] Consequently, Levi joyfully shows his repentance by means of a joyful banquet.

Luke changes the constituency of those attending the banquet as he received it from Mark (2:15) from "tax collectors and sinners", on the one hand, and "Jesus and his disciples" on the other,[43] to "tax collectors and others" because this is his way of showing Jesus' disagreement with Pharisaic religious standards towards people. "The issue is not the party but who is invited to it."[44] The portrayal of some people as "sinners" will be put on the lips of the Pharisees, a description Luke will show to be improper. It is also a way of making a link with the following verse (5:30) in which the reaction of the Pharisees is introduced.

4.5 THE CONFRONTATION (5:30)

Breaking the flow of the events taking place so far, the Pharisees enter the scene together with their scribes (οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν).[45] They are not part of the banquet but given the public character of such meals,

[42] Green contends that both table-fellowship and fasting served the purpose of maintaining group boundaries (Luke NICNT [1997] 248).

[43] Luke also suppresses the Markan reference to these people as those "many who followed him [Jesus]" (Mark 2:15). It may be surprising, if we keep in view Luke's interest in discipleship. One reason may be Luke's interest in preserving his persistent concept of discipleship as "en route" (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 242) while in Mark they are presented "reclining at the table". Schweizer argues that it is a way to intensify the conflict (Luke [1984] 111).

[44] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 495.

[45] In contrast with Mark who has the scribes of the Pharisees (οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων, Mark 2:16) and with Matthew who has the Pharisees only (οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Matt 9:11).

which made them a social event, it is historically plausible that the Pharisees could appear after the meal, during the table talk. It is interesting to notice that there are not only the Pharisees but also their scribes whose task was related to the law, and thus it can be implied that the reason for their appearance is "to monitor legal observance."[46] The conflict in the story is introduced as caused first of all by the attitude of the Pharisees towards table regulations, "why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"[47] They apply the same purity regulations of the Temple to the household, which affects both the ritual cleanness of the food eaten, and the moral character of those sitting at the table.[48] Therefore, and as a consequence of the different attitude towards forgiveness and repentance between Jesus and the Pharisees shown above, the latter consider Levi as an unrepentant sinner and sharing table with him to be incorrect. Their opposition is further evidenced in their grumbling, γογγύζω, a Lukan addition to the account that graphically expresses the objection of the Pharisees and their scribes.[49]

[46] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 247.

[47] After considering different possibilities as to what constituted the element of conflict, whether for political, legal, moral or religious symbolism reasons, Neale does not reach any conclusion with regard to the cause of the conflict, but he leaves it as "an open question" (None but the Sinners [1991] 118-29).

[48] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 247.

[49] There are two other instances in Luke in which the disagreement of the Pharisees is depicted in similar fashion because of Jesus' welcoming and fellowshipping with toll collectors and sinners (15:2; 19:7), although the term used is γογγύζειν (5:30), a hapax legomenon in the New Testament.

It is in the mouth of the Pharisees that the term "sinner" appears for the first time in Luke, with the exception of the confession of Peter (5:8), which is pronounced in a different setting and with different connotations to those in its use here. At this point, it is used to define those people who, according to Pharisaic regulations, do not live in harmony with the law. However for Luke the issue is not whether Levi is a sinner or not, but of rejecting the Pharisees' presuppositions as to who sinners are. In fact, Jesus himself acknowledges, even if in very general terms, that he has come "to call sinners to repentance" (5:32) as has been the case with Levi. There is a certain irony in the way the conflict over who the sinners are is presented. On the one hand the Pharisees see people like Levi as outsiders to the law and its regulations and therefore sinners while they see themselves as blameless. Jesus' words on the other hand seems to agree with that limited reductionist and factional view and, portraying himself as a physician, he argues that it is the reason why he is ministering to the sick, i.e. to the sinners, and not to those who are well spiritually. It is certainly not the case that Jesus is reckoning the Pharisees as without the need to repent but, as was already the case at the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus is evidencing the lack of understanding towards his ministry by some people especially those belonging to leading religious groups like the Pharisees.

It could be argued that there is a problem of communication between Jesus and the Pharisees, if as Sanders has argued, no religious group within Judaism would have objected to the offering of forgiveness to a repentant sinner. If Levi

and his companions have repented, where is the problem? Sanders would say that it is in the new understanding of repentance Jesus conveys. It is not that Jesus is offering unconditional forgiveness or forgiveness to unrepentant sinners. It should be borne in mind that the concluding words of Jesus in this story include Luke's redactional work, having Jesus qualify his call as aiming at "repentance" (5:32). "Jesus' proclamation of forgiveness was not unconditional. The condition of its effectiveness was obviously the conversion".[50] But it is conversion through the acceptance of Jesus and his ministry and no longer through the reforming of people's lives through the fulfilment of the requirements of the law. The offence for the religious groups representing largely accepted views within Judaism is that Jesus by-passes traditionally accepted demands concerning repentance and becomes himself the criterion for inclusion into the Kingdom he claims to herald.

A different issue is what Sanders affirms, after analysing the different passages in which Jesus is presented teaching and preaching repentance, i.e. that this is just editorial work and thus we cannot picture Jesus as "one who called for general repentance in view of the coming kingdom."[51] Chilton however shows that even editorial statements cannot be removed to articulate any theory on the historical teachings and emphases of Jesus, since they are presented "together with more primitive material, so that the removal of everything that is

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[50] Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (1985) 204.

[51] Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (1985) 110.

'editorial' would create a vacuum, not a solution."[52] Besides that, the logical conclusion of Sanders' arguments would be that the teaching of Jesus was in dissonance with what his followers so emphatically made of it.[53] Therefore, in the action of Levi there is not only Luke's obvious editorial hand reinforcing the need of repentance as the consequence expected in those following Jesus. "As an ideal model of response to Jesus, Levi's action illustrates the nature of Jesus' call to repentance."[54] Levi, the toll collector, by leaving everything, manifests his determination to break away from his actual living reality to join in the reality of the Kingdom of God, uttered in Jesus' call. This turn in one's own life orientation is what Luke calls repentance. [55]

Once again, it must be emphasised that in the Lukan narrative the role of the Pharisees is not to be understood as that of those opposing repentance and forgiveness for the sinners. Nor is the conflict over the issue of purity at the table, although that is present. What Luke wants to accentuate in his characterisation of the Pharisees is that, according to the twofold response to divine initiative portrayed in his gospel, it is the leading people like them who fail to acknowledge God's purpose at work in Jesus' ministry towards groups like toll collectors and sinners. It must be assumed that, on the one hand, Luke is not doing away with the law, neither is he, on the other, dismissing

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[52] Chilton, "Jesus and the Repentance of Sanders," (1988) 3 n.7.

[53] Chilton, "Jesus and the Repentance of Sanders," (1988) 3.

[54] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 245.

[55] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 246.

repentance. The heart of the matter is that, as was the case in the preaching of John the Baptist, all Jewish (and non-Jewish) people are required to do the same. Regardless of any other claim, they are asked to repent. Repentance takes on a new meaning, namely, obedience to God through Jesus who is the way to salvation.[56]

4.5 AN INCLUSIVE SALVATION (5:31-32)

The question raised by the Pharisees and their scribes as to why they "eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners" (5:30) is directed to Jesus' disciples, and it does not only provoke the conflict but also provides the basis for Jesus' reply. Such a dictum comes in two parts, the first a proverb (5:31) and the second an interpretation (5:32). The medical imagery present in the proverb was common in the Hellenistic age[57] in which "the philosopher is the doctor, vice is sickness, and virtue is health. In this case Jesus is the doctor, sickness is sin, and health is righteousness."[58] One more example of such proverbs in which the metaphor of healing is applied to Jesus' ministry is found in 4:23, where it is Jesus once again who uses it and directly applies it to himself.

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[56] Allison, "Jesus and the Covenant," (1987) 76.

[57] Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 32:14-30; Epictetus, *Discourses* 3:23,30

[58] Johnson, Luke SP (1991) 97.

In the light of Luke's general understanding of sickness as the outworking of evil,[59] the healing ministry of Jesus becomes an essential part of his programmatic discourse in the synagogue (4:18-19), and therefore an essential element in understanding God's salvific purpose in and through Jesus. When John the Baptist asks for assurance about Jesus as God's Messiah, Jesus' answer is to give examples of his healing activity as a sign-proof of God's working through him (7:18-23; cf. Is 58:6; 61:1-2). By equating God's saving activity with his own messianic (healing) ministry, Jesus is also providing a reference point for the beginning of the "in-breaking kingdom of God".[60] Such healing activity is at the heart of the first commissioning of the disciples for ministry (9:1-2; 10:9).

The law regarded some sicknesses as a matter of impurity. People with skin diseases (Lev 13-14) such as leprosy (Luke 5:12-14; 17:11-19), or discharges (Lev 15) such as a haemorrhage (Luke 8:42b-48) were considered impure and constrained to live as community outsiders. So, when Jesus restores health to some one, he is restoring him or her to purity. "The practical outcome is that such healed individuals are also restored to full and active membership in the holy community, the people of God."[61] This question becomes relevant when

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[59] For instance, Jesus rebukes the fever of Peter's mother in law in the same way as he rebukes an evil spirit (ἐπιτιμάω, 4:39, 35, 41), and in Acts 10:38, Peter defines Jesus' activity as "doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil". However, this understanding of health and healing as more than just affecting the physical body was a common understanding of the time. Garrett asserts that Satan "controls individuals by means of sickness and demon possessions" but fails to control Jesus (Demise of the Devil [1989] 43). For a social study on the subject, see Pilch, "Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts," (1991) 181-209.

[60] Green, Theology of Luke (1995) 95-6.

[61] Pilch, "Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts," (1991) 207.

the proverbial words of Jesus on the healing of the sick are related to the accusation by the Pharisees and their scribes that toll collectors are sinners. Healing resembles the forgiveness[62] granted to Levi by Jesus in that Levi is restored into a community, this time that of the followers of Jesus. As Sanders has indicated, it is not a restoration into the larger community over which Jesus assumes no control or authority.[63] Even though the Pharisees still see Levi as a sinner, as someone unclean and therefore outside their understanding of what are the limits of religious acceptability, he is cleared by Jesus on the grounds of his acceptance of the call to follow him. Levi is not an outsider but someone within the realm of the Kingdom of God that Jesus is bringing. Its boundaries are extended, for inclusion into the Kingdom of God is "through Jesus' dispensing with all varieties of credentials for membership other than repentance."[64] This creates a reversal of contemporary religious norms. The fact is that those who consider themselves socio-religious insiders, without the need of a physician, are the ones who do not see their need to repent and therefore become outsiders to Jesus' group and to the reality of the Kingdom. Meanwhile, those considered as outsiders by people representing more widespread socio-religious values become through repentance part of the eschatological community Jesus' followers embrace. According to the Lukan account, in the eschatological community the different attitudes towards Jesus

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[62] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 248.

[63] He speaks of a welcoming into Jesus' own community which would in turn give his followers a sense of belonging into a community. Cf. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (1985) 203. *Contra* Perrin, Rediscovering (1967) 103.

[64] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 244.

and his ministry, and thus towards the need to repent, become the ultimate criteria for membership into the Kingdom.

The proverb about spiritual sickness is disclosed next by Jesus, with a remark introduced by the formula "I have (not) come" (οὐκ ἐλήλυθα, cf. 4:43; 7:34; 12:49, 51; 19:10), which becomes a way of reinforcing the mission of Jesus as a call to repentance and salvation.[65] Luke presents such a mission here as already taking place and the change of the verb ἔρχομαι from its aorist form (Mark 2:17) to its perfect form, points to an effect reaching to the present.[66] The verb καλέω is to be translated as "to summon"[67] since in Luke it is clearly a call to repentance, and not "to invite" (i.e. to a banquet) as the context of the meal may suggest or the comparison of the Kingdom of God with a banquet may also imply (14:7-24).[68] It is also seen in Luke only that the call is "to repentance", and this is important for it reinforces the argument that sin is not being condoned.[69]

Jesus is presented issuing a call to repentance to one thought to be a sinner by those of the leading socio-religious strata. After all, Jesus may not be denying the fact that people like Levi are sinners,[70] but the contrast comes in the

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[65] Bovon asserts that what Luke emphasises is that Jesus' call to repentance is a call to conversion (Luke the Theologian [1987] 280, 288)

[66] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 592; cf. BDF § 340.

[67] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 247.

[68] Jeremias, Parables (1972) 121.

[69] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 247; *contra* Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (1985) 206.

[70] Bock sees this as a "note of sarcasm" in the story, Luke BECNT (1994) 498.

different treatment they receive from Pharisees and from Jesus. For the Pharisees, it is a matter of exclusion.[71] The sinners are those outside the boundaries of socio religious acceptability. They are outsiders. For Jesus, the issue is repentance and it is required of all (cf. 3:8; 13:3, 5), even though he makes a rhetorical distinction between the "healthy" and the "sick". It is not that Jesus concedes that the Pharisees are the righteous ones and therefore they do not need him, but it is a way of signifying that they do not acknowledge their need.[72] They are the (self)righteous ones.

That Jesus speaks of Levi and his friends as sinners may seem a point of agreement between Jesus and the Pharisees, but it would certainly only be for rhetorical reasons, in the sense that Jesus wants to play on their own ground. Thus, even if people like Levi are sinners, the divine initiative at work in Jesus' ministry seeks them out. Jesus aims at their repentance in order to grant their forgiveness. After all, the authority of the Son of Man to forgive sins has already been established (cf. 5:24). Furthermore, with his welcoming and fellowshipping with toll collectors and sinners, Jesus is implicitly criticising the Pharisees as religious leaders of the people for they fail as "shepherds of the flock" (cf. Ez 34).[73] The paradox is that Jesus sees those whom Pharisees see as sinners as capable of receiving help instead of as a threat to purity.[74]

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[71] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 246.

[72] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 498-500.

[73] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 131-3; Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 248.

[74] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 246.

4. 6 CONCLUSION

The first conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees sets the context for the story of the conversion of Levi, a toll collector who leaves everything to follow Jesus' call. He receives Jesus in his home and prepares a big dinner for him, which provokes the criticism of the Pharisees and their scribes. Jesus' response is unambiguous: ministering to the sick, to the sinner, is the goal of his ministry which aims at repentance.

Some relevant redactional insertions have enhanced Luke's emphases in the story. Thus, it is Luke who reiterates the fact that Levi is a toll collector (5:27), which initially indicates his dubious moral stand. In fact he is a socio-religious outsider who nonetheless is characterised as part of the group of those that in the third gospel is going to respond positively to the ministry of Jesus. As a way to emphasise the radical character of both the call of Jesus and the decision of Levi, Luke says that Levi leaves everything to follow Jesus (5:28) and that it is at Levi's house that a banquet is taking place (5:29). The response of the Pharisees is described as a murmuring (5:30) in Luke and it is only he who says that the objective of the ministry of Jesus is repentance (5:32).

From the analysis of the account of the conversion of Levi, some elements can be underlined, starting with the call of Levi itself, which evidences God's salvific initiative at work in Jesus in as much as it is offered to one socially and

religiously ostracized. The response to this call is a positive one from Levi who leaves everything behind as a sign of the change in allegiance from mammon to God. Nonetheless, the whole situation provokes the rejection by the Pharisees, which sets the terms of the conflict in the narrative. The Pharisees are unable to interpret the attitude of Levi and the banquet he offers to Jesus as signs of his repentance, but still consider him a sinner and reject Jesus' welcoming attitude towards him. In fact, the question of who is a sinner becomes a major element in the conflict according to Luke for while the Pharisees see people like Levi as sinners, Jesus emphasises the universality of sin and in consequence the need for repentance. The hostile attitude of the Pharisees provokes Jesus' final words which acknowledge Levi's repentance in the recognition of his need of Jesus, which is the basis of his ministry to the sinner.

5. THE CONVERSION OF A WOMAN OF THE CITY (Luke 7:36-50)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the first questions that the study of the story of the so-called "sinful woman" raises is whether, on the basis of the similarities shared by the various accounts (1) it is a development from the Markan story of the woman who anoints Jesus or (2) an original event which is transmitted with different nuances by two different traditions or (3) one of two distinct events which share some common elements but refer back to two different traditions. The position taken in this study judges the Lukan version to be a development of the common tradition that gave origin to the Markan account but which arose independently from the other.[1]

The two main arguments considered are that (1) on the basis of the similarities between the two accounts of the anointing of Jesus,[2] it is highly improbable that they refer back to two different anointings, of which Mark recounts one of them and Luke the other. (2) The dissimilarities between the Markan and Lukan anointing stories are so important that they become definitive in

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[1] On the history of the tradition see Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 685-6; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 305-7.

[2] The similarities, as summarised by Fitzmyer (Luke AB [1981] 684), are the following: (1) Luke omits the corresponding Markan parallel ("The Anointing of Jesus in Bethany", 14:3-9) in chapter 22, since he considers it a duplicate, which he often avoids; (2) an unknown and uninvited woman anoints Jesus (Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37-38); (3) Jesus is found reclining at the table (Mark 14:3; Luke 7:36); (4) the woman carries an alabaster jar of perfume (Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37); (5) Simon is the name of the host (Mark 14:3; Luke 7:40); (6) the reactions of the other fellow guests are voiced (Mark 14:4-5; Luke 7:49); (7) Jesus approaches the woman favourably (Mark 14:6-9; Luke 7:44-48, 50).

asserting the existence of at least *two* different versions of a single tradition.[3] To this could be added the fact that the account is found at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The other anointing stories however are placed within the context of the passion week (Mark 14:3-9; Matt 26:6-13; John 12:1-8),[4] thematically pointing to Jesus' death, in Luke "first and foremost the pericope has been formulated as a proclamation of the grace of God to sinners".[5] This particular line of tradition from Luke's own source,[6] full of unique literary and theological nuances, results in an episode which is unparalleled in the other synoptics and John.

There is no specific mention of the town in which this story takes place. Jesus is travelling from place to place, between Capernaum, where Jesus heals the servant of a centurion (7:1-9) and Nain, where he raises the son of a widow

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[3] There are different elements that are uniquely Lukan: (1) The action in Luke takes place in the house of a Pharisee (7:36) while in Mark it is in the house of "Simon the Leper" (Mark 14:3); (2) the Lukan location is Galilee while in Mark it is Bethany (Mark 14:3); (3) the woman who anoints Jesus is said to be a sinner (7:37), of which nothing is said in Mark. (4) She cries at the feet of Jesus (7:38) and (5) her tears wetted his feet (7:38); she then (6) dries (7:38) (7) kisses (7:38) and (8) anoints Jesus' feet (7:38) while in Mark the woman anoints Jesus' head (Mark 14:3). The reaction of Simon is answered by Jesus (9) with the parable of the two debtors (7:41-43); while in Mark it is "some of those present" who make the criticism and rebuke the woman (Mark 14:4). (10) The action of the woman is interpreted as the result of her love (7:47), not as related to Jesus' burial (Mark 14:8). (11) Forgiveness of sins is pronounced to the woman (7:48); (12), which is contested by those at table (7:49). (13) Finally, the woman departs in peace (7:50), while Mark concludes with her action being praised as worthy to be remembered (Mark 14:9). See, Johnson, Luke SP (1991) 129, and Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 684-5.

[4] Even though there are similarities between Luke and the anointing stories in Matthew, Mark and John, "the story has quite a distinct focus in Luke." (Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions [1977] 96 n.2).

[5] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 352.

[6] Based on the apparent contradiction between the story and the parable, the unity of the whole account has been disputed. Witherington denies such a contradiction and argues that it is highly unlikely that Luke would overlook such an inconsistency or that he would create it himself. Thus, the passage should be considered as a unity Luke has received from his own source (Women in the Ministry of Jesus [1984] 53-4). Without denying that Luke has probably received most of this text in its final form, other scholars have argued from a form-critical point of view that the account includes a pronouncement (7:36-40, 44-47) and a parable (7:41-43), plus 7:49, to which he has added 7:48, 50 (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 684; Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 306).

(7:11-16).[7] After that, there is no other spatial reference until 8:1, which reads that "soon afterwards he [Jesus] went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God." However, in 4:14-9:50 the itinerant ministry of Jesus is geographically located in Galilee,[8] and it is noted that Jesus used to preach in the synagogue on the Sabbath (4:14-15, 31-35, 43), and the content of his preaching was on the kingdom of God (4:43; 8:1).

Also important for the interpretation of this story is its context in the gospel of Luke. It has already been mentioned above that the account takes place in the Galilean stage of the ministry of Jesus (4:14-9:50). There is a thematic continuity between 7:1-8:3 which is centred on the response of people to the ministry of Jesus.[9] The general picture of Jesus provided by this account depicts him as the Kingdom preacher, one who is greater than a prophet, with God's power and authority to heal and forgive sins. Most of the responses presented in this context are positive. They come from a gentile Jewish-sympathiser centurion (7:1-10); a poor widow (7:11-17), toll collectors and sinners (7:29, 34-35), and also women (7:36-50 and 8:1-3). All these contrast with those mentioned as responding negatively to the preaching of Jesus,

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[7] Green, Luke NICNT (1998) 305.

[8] Green, Luke NICNT (1998) 200.

[9] The passages included are "The Healing of the Centurion's Servant" (7:1-10); "the Raising of the Widow's Son" (7:11-17); "Jesus and John the Baptist" (7:18-30); "Jesus and his Generation" (7:31-35); "The Woman who Anoints Jesus" (7:36-50); "The Women who Follow Jesus" (8:1-3).

namely the Pharisees and experts of the Law who "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (7:30).

It is in this section on the reception of the ministry of Jesus that the story of the conversion of the woman is found. It is preceded by Jesus' declaration to the messengers of John the Baptist that his healing miracles and his preaching of the good news to the poor indicate that he is the expected Messiah of God (7:18-23). It is the words of Jesus acknowledging the accusation of befriending toll collectors and sinners that introduce the account (7:31-35). It should be no surprise that such a sinner-receptive ministry would deeply touch a woman whom others reject precisely because she was a sinner (7:37). It will be argued later that 8:1-3 is also linked to the story of the sinful woman inasmuch as it provides the following step in Luke's presentation of the attitude towards possessions of those who repent.[10]

5.2 THE SETTING (7:36)

The number of encounters between Jesus and the Pharisees that Luke has presented thus far (cf. 5:17:26; 27-32; 33-39; 6:1-11; 7:29-30) shows an increasing incompatibility between them. Such a discord starts with an apparently blasphemous attitude of Jesus (5:21) and a question by the Pharisees

[10] According to Marshall, from the section on Jesus' teaching to disciples (6:12-49) Luke moves on "to further detail regarding the self-revelation of Jesus to the people" (7:1-50) (Luke NIGTC [1978] 276). He includes 8:1-3 in the section he calls "Jesus Teaches in Parables (8:1-21)", and it will be argued below, that 8:1-3 is an essential part of the section 7:1-50.

to the disciples about their eating with toll collectors and sinners (5:30), with no further reaction by the Pharisees. It continues with the mentioning of the pious observance of the Law by the disciples of the Pharisees in contrast to those of Jesus (5:33), and a direct confrontation in which Pharisees accuse Jesus of doing unlawful things on the Sabbath (6:2). This friction leads the Pharisees, to look for a reason to accuse Jesus (6:7) and to plot furiously against him (6:11). All this seems to reach a zenith in Jesus' statement about the Pharisees' rejection of John's baptism, which for Luke is equivalent to a rejection of God's purpose for themselves (7:30).

This escalating animosity provides a background against which the invitation of the Pharisee to Jesus should be envisaged. There is of course no need to regard *a priori* the pharisaic group in the Lukan narrative as a monolithic entity but rather as possibly holding a diversity of views, for example towards Jesus.[11] The offering of hospitality by one of the Pharisees to Jesus evokes, to say the least, some sort of non-compromising regard for him. The very fact that the host is a Pharisee, highly concerned with purity regulations, because "all meals required ritual purity",[12] would not allow for a guest who would not be considered up to the purity standards held by Pharisees themselves. Social scientists have also shown that hospitality was offered in those days within an agreed understanding of similar status, which in this case the Pharisee is

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[11] Tannehill, affirms that "the scribes' and the Pharisees' continuing criticism of Jesus because he is a friend of tax collectors and sinners does not mean that communication has been broken between these Jewish leaders and Jesus" (Narrative Unity [1986] 177).

[12] Neusner, "Pharisaic Law," (1971) 340.

granting to Jesus.[13] Therefore, as far as 7:36 is concerned, the issuing of the invitation by the Pharisee to Jesus should allow *prima facie* for the possibility of a different attitude on the part of the reader with open, even though informed, approaches.[14]

The invitation issued by the Pharisee that Jesus eats with him (7:36) becomes the first of the three instances in which Jesus is found at table with a Pharisee (also 11:37; 14:1). From a narrative point of view, Tannehill argues that the repeated stories in which Jesus dines with Pharisees are typical scenes that reveal a frequent occasion and conflict situation in the ministry of Jesus. The meal setting forces a confrontation between Jesus and Pharisees.[15]

Any reference to the occasion for the invitation is withheld from the text. On the basis of the treatment that the Pharisee bestows on Jesus as a prophet, and because of the addressing of Jesus as "teacher", Fitzmyer interprets the meal as "a desire to honor an important person."[16] It has been shown above that it was a

[13] See Pitt-Rivers, "Stranger," (1968) 12-30 and "Law of Hospitality," (1977) 94-112.

[14] Gowler finds some strange situations in the story. "Why would one who had rejected the purpose of God invite Jesus to dinner, an apparent act of friendship? Is there still hope for the Pharisees? (...) Why is Jesus dining with his enemies?" (Pharisees [1991] 219). Similar issues to this will be addressed within the present chapter, although at this early stage, the Pharisee will be granted "the benefit of the doubt".

[15] Tannehill, Narrative Unity (1986) 178. Also, Darr, Character Building (1992) 101-3.

[16] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 688. Also, Witherington, Women in the Ministry of Jesus (1984) 54; Jeremias, Eucharistic Words (1966) 48 n.4; Josephus *Ant.* 6.163, 248-9.

frequent practice of Jesus to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and preach, which in the case of our account makes it a feasible context for the invitation.[17]

5.3 THE ENCOUNTER (7:37-38)

In the midst of this celebration an uninvited guest appears. Luke says that she is a local woman,[18] who is known as a "sinner" by those at the banquet. It is interesting from a literary point of view that it is the narrator who names her a sinner, since it is normally those opposing Jesus who are the ones bringing up the sinfulness of a given character (cf. 5:30; 7:34, 39; 15:2; 19:7). In Luke's gospel ἁμαρτωλός is given a different content depending on who is using the term.[19] The fact that it is the narrator himself who advances the label is also of significance in the discussion about when her sins were forgiven. That the woman is a sinner is a picture that Luke provides (7:37), the Pharisee accentuates (7:39), and Jesus implicitly endorses (7:47).[20] This is an important

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[17] Bailey, Peasant Eyes (1980) 3; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 308, 493-4; Jeremias, Parables (1972) 126. Cf. Josephus, *Vit.* 279; SB I, 611-15; II 202-6; IV:2, 611-39,.

[18] It is important to notice the relevant roles plays by women in this *L* source (cf. 7:11-17, 36-50; 8:1-3).

[19] Αμαρτωλός is used in Luke 18 times. In two instances it is applied by individuals to themselves (5:8; 18:13). Five times the term is mentioned in a general way as part of the argument (6:32, 33, 34 [x2]; 13:2). Five more times, the concept is used derogatorily, as a recrimination against Jesus for his welcoming of sinners (5:30; 7:34, 39; 15:2; 19:7), and, in answer to the accusations, ἁμαρτωλῷ is used three times by Jesus in a positive sense of those who were recipients of his ministry (5:32; 15:7, 10).' Ανθρώπων ἁμαρτωλῶν serves once as the definition by the risen Jesus of those who crucified him (24:7). It leaves the only two instances in which the narrator refers to ἁμαρτωλός/-οί(7:37; 15:1). Both cases state the situation of those coming to meet Jesus. Therefore, those instances in which particular people are pointed out as sinners can be distinguished: in the incriminatory situations (5:30; 7:34, 39; 15:2; 19:7), the receptive use of the term by Jesus (5:32; 15:7, 10), and a more neutral *state of affairs* when used by the narrator (7:37; 15:1).

[20] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 688-9.

factor to be considered when the question of whether the woman comes to the Pharisees already forgiven during a prior encounter with Jesus or not is addressed.

However, the nature of the woman's sin is not revealed. Most scholars tend to present her as a prostitute.[21] Others argue she is an adulteress[22] or the wife of an irreligious person.[23] Matthew Black argues that Luke may be using the Aramaic word for sinner *ḥayyābtā*, meaning "debtor" which links well with the motif of the parable.[24] At first, the possibility that she is a prostitute makes her presence at the scene awkward. This is a banquet held in the house of a Pharisee, i.e. of someone highly concerned with meal purity standards,[25] at which the woman would not just be a threat but an infringement.[26] On the other hand, it was customary, when such a banquet was offered, to make it an open social event. Uninvited people could enter the house and listen to the

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[21] Plummer Luke ICC (1986) 210; Schmid, Lukas RNT (1960); Jeremias, Parables (1972) 126; Derrett, Law (1970) 266-78; Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 354; Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 309. Elements such as the undoing of her own hair, with its erotic connotations for Jewish people; the physical contact with Jesus, for the woman ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ; the kissing of his feet, and the alabaster flask of ointment are interpreted as possible clues to her being a prostitute. Readers familiar with the use of "feet" as an euphemistic term for "genitals" in the Hebrew Bible (Prov 19:2; Is 6:2; 7:20; Ezek 16:25) would find the word highly suggestive (Pope, "Euphemism," ABD I [1992] 720-5). Furthermore, the fact that she is a sinner ἐν τῇ πόλει makes it more evident for Bovon that she is a prostitute since "son 'péché' est surtout un péché social" (Saint Luc 1-9 [1991] 383; also Orchard, "Composition," (1937) 243-5.

[22] Zahn, Lucas KzNT (1913) 320-1.

[23] Schlatter, Lukas (1960) 259.

[24] Black, AAGA (1967) 181-3. Fitzmyer does not rule out such a possibility (Luke AB [1981] 689).

[25] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 307; Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 104.

[26] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 309; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 308; Schürmann, Lukasevangelium I (1969) 431.

conversation, and poor people could get some food.[27] It may also be observed that "the woman's action is rebuked, and her presence is not".[28] From a sociological angle, Green emphasises that she belongs to "a category of persons who qualify as 'the poor' for whom Jesus has been anointed to bring good news (4:18-19; 7:22)"[29] which would make her presence less of a surprise. Furthermore, Jesus has just been accused of befriending sinners (7:34), which certainly provides the reason for the arrival of a γυνὴ ἁμαρτωλός.[30]

The actions of the woman become the core of the following argument between Jesus and his host, the Pharisee. The woman willingly approaches Jesus to anoint his feet with the ointment she has brought for that purpose. Nevertheless, the first action by the woman is to weep with many tears, "bathing" (βρέχω) Jesus' feet (cf. 7:44) and drying them with her own hair. It has been argued that it is Jesus' feet and not his head that the woman anoints for the obvious reason that, since Jesus is reclining on the table,[31] it is his feet that are available to her.[32] Also an emotional breakdown has been seen as the

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[27] SB 4:611-39; Ellis, Luke NCB (1974²) 122; Talbert, Reading Luke (1982) 82; Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 694; Bailey, Peasant Eyes (1980) 4-5; Witherington, Women in the Ministry of Jesus (1984) 54-5.

[28] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 694-5; Witherington, Women in the Ministry of Jesus (1984) 55.

[29] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 309.

[30] Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 102; Evans, Luke NIBC (1990) 121; Danker, Jesus and the New Age (1988) 169.

[31] The term κατακλίθη is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament.

[32] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 689; Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 309-10; York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 123.

cause of her anointing of Jesus' feet; the tears accidentally wet his feet, even though her intention was to anoint of Jesus' head.[33] However, the anointing of Jesus' feet as the woman's first intention should not be dismissed, for even though her tears wet the feet first, she goes on to anoint them.[34] It is also an indication of the humble character of the woman, for her action corresponds to that of slaves,[35] and the seven-fold reference to the feet in this passage brings to mind the unworthy character of the woman, because of the "offensive, unclean nature of feet in Oriental society".[36]

No less offensive, is the action of the woman drying Jesus' feet with her unbound hair. It becomes an infringement of the different conventions socially ascribed to both the private and public spheres. In this case, the woman transgresses social conventions related to what was honourable in the public sphere by loosening her hair before men, a shameless action by the social standards of the day.[37] Such action brings shame not only to the woman but also to Jesus himself by virtue of his acceptance of her deeds.[38] Jeremias, in

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[33] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 308-9.

[34] Nolland finds it a deliberate act in the light of the following interpretation of the action supplied by vv. 44-46 (Luke WBC [1989] 354).

[35] Bailey, Peasant Eyes (1980) 4; Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 223.

[36] Bailey, Peasant Eyes (1980) 5. He assumes the understanding of the feet as unclean in Oriental society as a given "from time immemorial until the present". The only references he gives for this, however, come from the Hebrew scriptures, from texts such as Exod 3:5; Pss 60:8; 108:9; 110:1.

[37] The term "shameless" is used here to indicate the dishonoured or negative meaning ascribed to the concept of female shame. In itself, female shame is the (positive) counterpart of male honour, for it expresses women's "modesty", "shyness" (cf. Sir 26:10-16; 42:9-12; 4 Macc 18:6-8; Thucydides *Hist.* 2.45.2, as quoted by deSilva "Honour and Shame," [2000] 521). See Malina & Neyrey, "Honor and Shame," (1991) 25-65, esp. 44; York, Last Shall be First (1991) 123; Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 223; Malina, NT World (1981) 44-5; Godet, Luke CFTL (1875) 1358.

[38] Malina, NT World (1981) 44-5; York, Last Shall be First (1991) 123.

reference to later literature like the Tosefta, indicates that the woman's shameful action could constitute a sufficient reason for a man to divorce his wife.[39]

The issue of how to interpret the tears of the woman is very difficult. Are they tears of repentance and joy? Or, are they tears of gratitude for attained forgiveness? The crux of the matter is (depending on how one reads those tears) the question of when the forgiveness of the woman takes place. If these are tears of remorse,[40] it must be assumed that forgiveness is still to come, while if the tears express gratitude, they manifest the already granted forgiveness.[41]

The argument that the tears of the woman express gratitude for forgiveness granted in a *previous encounter* with Jesus[42] conflicts with Luke's own theological emphasis; it is in the *present* words of Jesus to her (see below) that the forgiving action lies. "Individuals are presented as following Jesus only after they have heard his words and observed his powerful deeds... [for] the authority of Jesus' word has already been established (cf. Luke 4:32, 36)".[43]

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[39] Sotah 5.9; j. Git. 9, 50d (cf. Jeremias, Parables [1972] 126).

[40] Goulder, Luke (1989) 339.

[41] Of course, this could be argued the other way round. Depending on whether it is asserted from other information in the text that the woman has already been forgiven in a previous encounter with Jesus or that she is forgiven in the course of this very encounter, so will her tears be interpreted. The interpretation will probably have to be a combination of both approaches.

[42] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 313; Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 705; Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 364; Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 359; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 687; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 306-7; Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 214; Godet, Luke CFTL (1875) 1362.

[43] Richard, New Views (1990) 111; Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 359.

Therefore, from a christological perspective, it is important for Luke to make clear in the text that it is Jesus who has the authority to forgive her sins, which is what he does during the banquet provoking the astonishment of those at the table (7:49).

The main argument offered by those who see in the woman's tears, gratitude and joy for the forgiveness received in a prior encounter with Jesus, is the parable of the two debtors itself (7:40-43). There, love is the response to forgiveness and not grounds for it. It is not until the creditor forgives the two debtors that the issue of love as a consequence of such an action comes to the picture. Love, shown by the woman's tears, rests on a previous forgiveness.[44]

In fact, little attention has been given to the tears of the woman as a token of gratitude for Jesus' acceptance as the first simple consequence (allowing that the woman's tears suggest penitence) that may be drawn from the fact that the story of the woman comes after the account in which Jesus is accused of befriending sinners (7:34) and that "wisdom is vindicated by all her children"

[44] However, Kilgallen ("John the Baptist," [1985] 675-9) argues from a different angle. There is no need, according to him, to make any presupposition with regard to the forgiveness of the woman as the result of a previous and unknown encounter with Jesus. If we read 7:36-50 as the continuity of 7:24-35, especially Luke's redactional comments in 7:29-30, the woman stands for those baptised by John the Baptist (7:29), in contrast to the Pharisee who stand for those who rejected John's baptism and consequently "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (7:30). So, it is the opposite responses to John's baptism that are embodied in the contrast between the woman's attitude and that of the Pharisee. Kilgallen concludes "that Luke expects the reader to understand that the woman of the story has already been forgiven because the reader realizes that she is one of those who accepted the baptism of John, mentioned in 7:29" (Kilgallen, "John the Baptist," [1985] 678 n.9). The position taken in this study however, diverges from Kilgallen's, even though there is agreement on the contextual links with the previous story. To dismiss the importance of forgiveness of sins by Jesus and to remove the Christological significance of 7:36-50, which "explicates the soteriological significance of Jesus" (Buckwalter, Christology [1996] 150) is completely unjustified. Also, the secondary role of John with

(7:35). As a result of his ministry to the sinner and in response to it, she is one of those whom Jesus welcomes, in contrast with the rejection suffered from others in society (e.g. the Pharisees). The woman, who is known to be a "sinner" in the city – that is, with an evil reputation among and probably rejected by most of her fellow citizens – finds acceptance by Jesus. Luke's emphasis on the divine salvific initiative is displayed here in the way Jesus welcomes her. Such an experience of acceptance results in an expression of loving gratitude. "It seems fair to assume that it is repentance that is demonstrated by her actions".[45] Without question, she has resolved to change her life.

Therefore, while the following analysis of the coming verses will provide a firmer basis for the position argued in this chapter, its working premises can be presented now: under the principle of divine initiative displayed in Jesus' ministry towards the sinner (cf. 7:34), the woman's actions reflect both her contrition for sin and gratitude for acceptance. These actions correspond with the expected response to the initiative made concrete in Jesus' welcoming her. Hence, the woman's gratitude for acceptance is reinterpreted into gratitude for forgiveness, inasmuch as Jesus' acceptance conveys forgiveness. Acceptance/forgiveness precedes any manifestation of loving gratitude for having been accepted/forgiven. It is not, then, a matter of making forgiveness

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regard to that of Jesus is evident under the criterion of the kingdom (7:28) (See Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions [1977] 99-100).

[45] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 145; cf. Leroy, "Lukas 7.36-50," (1973) 92; Navonne, "Banquet," (1970) 158.

dependent on love, but rather that her love is reinterpreted as the result of such forgiveness.

In other words, the story can be focussed on from at least two different angles without necessarily resulting in a contradiction. On the one hand, the perspective of the woman shows that she feels welcomed by Jesus and, wanting to show him gratitude for his acceptance, she ends up forgiven by him. On the other hand, from Jesus' perspective, his acceptance of the sinful woman entails the eschatological forgiveness of her sins. As a consequence of this, the grateful actions of the woman acquire further significance as loving gratitude for forgiveness.[46]

5.4 THE CRITICISM/CONFLICT (7:39)

The above study of the way in which the interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees grows increasingly tense throughout the Lukan co-texts makes the reaction of the Pharisee in this passage seem surprisingly mild in form. The harsh reaction one could expect from the Pharisee is here presented in a subtle manner, for he just speaks to himself (εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, 7:39). It is less belligerent in form than one might anticipate, from someone whose main guest

[46] This more open and complex argument should not be denied by any attempt to harmonise the narrative and the parable too much. The parable is a limited account in relation to the narrative itself since, for example, there is no explicit moral judgement on the debtors as there is on the woman who is labelled a "sinner". And even though the central character in the parable is the graceful creditor (Neale, None but the Sinners [1991] 145), the emphasis in the parable by Jesus is on the two debtors and not on the moneylender (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 311). So there should not be an imposition of the

is infringing on the ritual purity of the meal setting through his contact with the sinful woman. Nevertheless, it will be shown below that this is part of Luke's redactional work.

Also as part of Luke's redactional work, the Pharisee only speaks to himself[47] and mumbles his rejection towards Jesus, "if this man were a prophet" (Οὗτος εἰ ἦν προφήτης, 7:39).[48] There is no evidence to assume that he has actually held such a view himself and that, in the course of the action, he has changed his mind. The Pharisee is just recalling a designation of Jesus already in use in the narrative context (7:16), a designation which Jesus had himself already assumed, at least implicitly (4:24) but which the Pharisee here rejects.[49] The Pharisee is not affected by the woman's repentance, but uses the occasion as an opportunity to criticise Jesus.[50] The woman becomes a secondary character and a means of questioning the ministry of Jesus.[51] The rejection by

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parable on the narrative, for it is a metaphor, not a simile or parallel. Other matters will be considered as the story unfolds.

[47] Green asserts that in Luke "those who engage in soliloquy have been persons lacking insight into Jesus' divine commission or even opponents of God's purpose (cf. 2:35; 5:21-22; 6:8). This is the case here, too" (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 310).

[48] In the third Gospel, Jesus is found implicitly assuming his role as a prophet in two instances. First, in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus acknowledges his rejection by his own fellow citizens when saying: "Truly I tell you, no prophet [προφήτης] is accepted in the prophet's hometown" (4:24). Second, after being made aware of Herod's intention to kill him, Jesus states "it is impossible for a prophet [προφήτην] to be killed outside of Jerusalem" (13:33). People elsewhere acknowledge him as a prophet (7:16; 9:8, 19; 24:19). On Jesus as prophet in Luke, see Marshall, Historian and Theologian (1988[3]) 125-8; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 213-5; Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 98-103.

[49] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 123; Tannehill, Narrative Unity (1986) 177; Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 102.

[50] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 144.

[51] Also the Pharisee's indictment on the woman contrasts with the attitude of Jesus who receives and, therefore, forgives her.

the Pharisee is based on the fact that Jesus seems unable to recognise what kind of woman she is. Being a known sinner in the city is not the clue to the accusation, since the pericope assumes that Jesus was just visiting the city as part of his itinerant ministry. The accusation is based on the fact that, although claiming to be a prophet, Jesus is not able to identify the sort of woman who is touching him.[52]

There is a thematic connection with the previous passage (7:24-35) in the polarised attitudes with regard to the positions taken up towards Jesus by the characters involved. At this stage in the narrative, and in consonance with the context of conflict present in other conversion stories in Luke, there are the two poles clearly defined. On the one hand, the sinful woman accepts Jesus, while, on the other hand, the Pharisee questions and rejects him.[53] In 7:24-35 the responses to the kingdom of God are portrayed likewise. Those who, including toll collectors, "acknowledged that God's way was right" (7:29) are called πᾶς ὁ λαός. In this same category must be included πάντων τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς who vindicate wisdom (7:35).[54] Opposed to these are the Pharisees and the experts of the law who are singled out as those who "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (7:30). They are also called τούς ἀνθρώπους τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης

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[52] According to the Pharisee, Jesus lacks prophetic clairvoyance (Friedrich, "προφήτης," TDNT 6.844, esp., n.400), since he is not able to recognise the kind of woman touching him and, therefore, considers Jesus' behaviour not prophetic but shameless because of his associating with the wicked (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 310).

[53] Tannehill, Narrative Unity (1986) 116.

[54] God is identified in 7:35 with "Wisdom" (σοφία) (cf. Prov 8:1-9:6). For further reading, Dunn, Christology (1980) 168-76.

(7:31). Luke, in his ideological characterization, makes it clear that the sinful woman in this account would correspond with those in the first group, while the Pharisee would be counted among those of the second.

There is another element in the passage of 7:24-35 that is also carried over to the story of the sinful woman: the rejection not only of the kingdom, but also of its prophet.[55] The accusation of Jesus' being a glutton and drunkard (7:34) refers to Deuteronomy 21:20, in which the context is concerned with a rebellious son and how his persistent "wrong doing" ("stubborn and rebellious... a profligate and a drunkard") would lead to his stoning. Even though there is no reference in this Lukan account to any attempt to stop Jesus' ministry by violent means, Luke, as the Deuteronomy text might suggest, puts the Old Testament saying in Jesus' lips not long after the previous encounter between him and the Pharisees has resulted in the plot against him (6:1:11).[56] In the "Six Woes" against Pharisees and teachers of the Law (11:37-53), the former are made responsible by Jesus for the blood of the prophets (11:49). Even though the teachers of the Law are singled out in this accusation, the way in which Jesus addresses them as τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης (11:50) is the same as that used in 7:31 to censure both the Pharisees' and teachers of the Law's attitude of rejection towards him and his preaching of the kingdom. This combined

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[55] On acceptance and rejection of God's prophet in Luke, see Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 99.

[56] Jeremias, Parables (1972) 160. There is, however, a previous attempt to act violently against Jesus after his programmatic sermon in the Nazareth synagogue (cf. Luke 4:28-29).

accusation provokes an alliance between the Pharisees and the teachers of the law against Jesus (11:53-54).

The christological context of the dispute is evident. Rejection of Jesus "is not seen as total, and the division in the people spoken of by Simeon is now expressed thematically as a split between the leaders (the Pharisees and Lawyers) and the people (and Tax-Collectors)."[57] Once again, the polarised picture Luke provides in his conversion stories, is unmistakable. Sinners [and toll collectors] are those open and positively responding to the preaching of Jesus, and thus converting. Jesus challenges social clichés by accepting, forgiving, saving and including in the Kingdom those otherwise socially ostracised. Conversely, those who are characterised by their strict observance of the Law and standing within acceptable social boundaries are the ones not only personally rejecting but even opposing both the message of the Kingdom of God and its prophet.

5.5 THE PARABLE (7:40-43)

It is in verse 40 that the Pharisee's name "Simon" is mentioned for the first time in the pericope. Luke's interest in portraying the divergent attitudes to Jesus of a Pharisee and of a sinner, has probably prevented him from laying the burden of the characterisation of the Pharisees on a specific individual. Thus,

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[57] Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 103.

the name of the Pharisee is not provided until the conflict and the main positions are clearly established.[58] It is also a very graphic way of presenting Jesus' breaking conventional labels thus far in the gospel. By calling the host by his name, Jesus rejects them.[59] Simon addresses Jesus as διδάσκαλε, which is a designation of Jesus mainly used by non-disciples or people whose stance concerning him is ambiguous.[60]

The fact that Simon doubts Jesus is a prophet (7:39) is, in the passage, based on Jesus' inability to discern the kind of woman touching him. This is an accusation that Simon keeps to himself and is only made known to the reader by the narrator from his advantageous point of view. However, Jesus knows Simon's thoughts, which proves he really is a prophet. Such a prophetic clairvoyance[61] on the part of Jesus is not something that the reader has to come to terms with at this point, since it was already in Simeon's prophecy (2:35)[62] and was displayed in the story of the healing of a paralytic (5:17-26, esp. 21-22). (In the latter passage, a similar situation arose, for, after Jesus granted forgiveness, the Pharisees kept their uneasiness to themselves, while Jesus knew what their thoughts were).[63] The situation creates another contrast here;

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[58] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 123 n.5, 124.

[59] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 311.

[60] Dawsey, Lukan Voice (1986) 6; Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 219 n.87; Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 698. Nolland notices that in 8:24; 9:33, 49 Luke changes διδάσκαλος or' Ραββί for ἐπιστάτα on the lips of disciples (Luke WBC [1989] 355). Marshall concludes it "is ultimately inadequate as a description of him" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 310).

[61] See, Friedrich, "προφήτης," TDNT 6.844 n.400.

[62] Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 102.

[63] Other references to prophetic clairvoyance displayed by Jesus are 6:8; 9:47; 11:17; 20:23.

the one between the accusation by Simon of Jesus' lack of knowledge and the actual knowledge displayed by Jesus in his response words.[64] By this, Jesus not only shows his prophetic character but also acknowledges and thus accepts the kind of woman who is touching him.

To face Simon's veiled accusation, Jesus tells a parable[65] saying that a moneylender has two creditors, one owing him 500 denarii, the other fifty. Given that the two debtors are unable to return the money owed, the creditor cancels their debts. The emphasis is more on the graceful attitude of the moneylender who forgives the debt than on that of the debtors, whose attitudes and reactions are not given. However, in relation to this short parable, Jesus addresses a question to Simon concerning which of the two debtors would love (or be grateful to)[66] the moneylender more, on the basis of his action. Simon's answer, even if correct, is introduced and qualified by ὑπολαμβάνω,[67] which then turns out not as straightforward as anticipated. Such an answer is

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[64] Bock points out that "when Jesus reads minds, a rebuke often follows" (Luke BECNT [1994] 698). Thus, in 6:8, Jesus confronts the Pharisees and teachers of the Law on the issue of healing on the Sabbath, while in 9:47, it is because of a discussion among the disciples about who would the greatest among them. 11:17 introduces Jesus' reaction to the accusation of driving out demons by Beelzebub, and in 20:23 the issue is on the payment of taxes to Caesar.

[65] Gowler refers to the Socratic interrogation as the style depicted in Jesus' questioning of Simon, where his own answers invalidate his arguments (Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 220, n.89). For further reading, see Clark, Rhetoric (1957) 26-40; Daube, Rabbinic Judaism (1956) 152; Aristotle, Rhetoric 3.18.2.

[66] Even though the term used is ἀγαπάω, translated here as "to love", connotations of gratitude are present, both as the outcome of the parable infers, and also on the basis of linguistic reasons. Since there is no Hebrew, Aramaic or Syriac word for the verb "to thank", the meaning is also implied in the Greek term here used. Fitzmyer shows there are several example in 1QH of the use of the Hebrew word הוֹדָה "to praise" to express gratitude (Luke AB [1981] 690; also Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 311; Jeremias, Parables [1972] 126-7). For further reading, see Wood, "ἀγαπάω," (1954-5) 319-20.

[67] Delling, "ὑπολαμβάνω," TDNT 4.15.

interpreted as "with an air of supercilious indifference",[68] a "grudging admission",[69] "expresses caution.... Most probably, however, Simon realises that he has been caught in a trap".[70] Jesus' function as a prophet and Simon's own acknowledgement of the teaching of the parable mark a turning point in the story. Simon passes from questioning Jesus to being put on the spot by him. The one questioning Jesus' judgement now finds his own judgement under question. The ground is open for the various reversals brought about by the kingdom of Jesus.

5.6 THE REVERSAL (7:44-47)

It is at this stage of the story that Jesus now addresses the woman, who has remained so far in the background of the scene, although Simon remains the one actually addressed by him. Jesus asks Simon whether he sees the woman; this could initially be a way of focussing his attention on her actions, which are going to be contrasted with those of Simon. Possibly, it is also a way of pushing Simon a step further, making him face the woman he repudiates because of her impure behaviour and from the example of whose conduct he is going to be admonished.[71] "Seeing" is a usual metaphor for Luke, for he uses it to describe the experience of those embracing the views of the kingdom.[72] In

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[68] Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 212.

[69] Danker, Jesus and the New Age (1988) 170.

[70] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 311.

[71] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 701; Plummer sees a rebuke in Jesus' question (Luke ICC [1896] 212).

[72] For further reading, see Culpepper, "Seeing," (1994) 434-43; Hamm, "Sight," (1986) 457-77.

Green's words, it "is an invitation to enlightenment".[73] It could be taken here as an implicit invitation to Simon by Jesus to change his attitude towards the woman.

After the question, Jesus describes in detail the woman's activities on his behalf, actions which he seems to have expected of Simon, his host (7:44-46). On the one hand, most scholars point out that there is no need to assume that Simon has failed in his display of basic hospitality towards Jesus.[74] There is no written evidence of the period that would suggest that the woman's action made up for what was missing,[75] so that it could be argued that the actions of the woman were not required of the host. On the other hand, by questioning Jesus, Simon breaches social conventions with regard to his role as host, for he is not only showing hostility towards Jesus but is also questioning his honour and allowing other guests to do likewise.[76]

Jesus confronts Simon with each of the three actions of the woman towards him, and reproaches Simon for not having done them himself ("οὐκ ἔδωκας"

[73] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 312.

[74] On hospitality, see Pitt-Rivers, "Stranger," (1968) 12-30 (or a summary of it by Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 223-4), and "Law of Hospitality," (1977) 94-112.

[75] Fitzmyer affirms that Simon's "omissions should not be emphasized as signs of impoliteness" (Luke AB [1981] 691) and Marshall points out that Simon "had been correct enough as host, but had not performed any special act of hospitality" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 311; cf. Nolland, Luke WBC [1989] 357; Harvey, Companion [1970] 244; Schürmann, Lukasevangelium I [1969] 435).

[76] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 312-3; cf. Bailey, Peasant Eyes (1980) 8-10, 16-7; Pitt-Rivers, "Law of Hospitality," (1977) 94-112.

[7:44, 45] and "οὐκ ἤλειψας" [7:46]).[77] While Simon did not provide water for Jesus' feet,[78] a kiss of greeting,[79] and oil to anoint his head,[80] the woman wet Jesus' feet with tears and dried them with her own hair, kissed Jesus' feet repeatedly, and poured perfume on them. However, it is not the actions of Simon *per se* that bring about the words of Jesus, but those contrasting attitudes displayed towards him by both Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman, made evident through her actions.[81] The emphasis is on the fact that the actions of the woman show a courtesy, respect and love for Jesus that Simon does not show at any time. The mediocre attention provided by Simon to a guest he is supposed to honour at the banquet betrays the tense relationship between him and Jesus.[82] The result of this is the assertion by Jesus about the woman's forgiveness, about which Jesus first tells Simon (7:47) and then the woman herself (7:48). Furthermore, it can also be argued that, since the account is set around the table, the attentions the intruding woman offers to Jesus come closer

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[77] Bailey mentions that the usual order of welcoming a guest would be "(1) the kiss of entering the house; (2) the washing of the feet; (3) the anointing of the head with oil. Significantly, this normal order is [partially] reversed to match the order of the actions of the woman" (Peasant Eyes [1980] 7).

[78] C. F. Evans finds the lack of provision of water for the feet "strange. Such a provision would appear to be automatic, especially at a banquet (cf. 11:37f.; John 13:1-10)" (Saint Luke [1990] 363; also Bailey (Peasant Eyes [1980] 8-9). However, Goppelt says that this was not common in banquets (cf. Str.-B., IV 615) and when provided the washing was done by a slave ("ὕδωρ," TDNT 8.323-4 & n.63). Although the provision of water for the feet for guests after travel is attested, there is no reference for it in Jewish literature as "a normal provision for guests" (Nolland, Luke WBC [1989] 357; also, Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 312; Str-B, I:427-8) which seem to be the case of our account.

[79] A kiss was not a Jewish hospitality custom, but a sign of both friendship and respect, therefore not required from Simon (Nolland, Luke WBC [1989] 357; Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 312). Stählin contemplates the possibility of Luke assuming the Greek practice ("φιλέω," TDNT 9.138-9).

[80] Once again, it is not an action to be expected from the host (Bock, Luke BECNT [1994] 702; Nolland, Luke WBC [1989] 357).

[81] Bailey adds that the tension builds not just because of the implied culture of the text but because of "this story as it develops" (Peasant Eyes [1980] 5).

[82] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 311.

to those expected of a host than those of Simon the Pharisee and can be read as a sign of the intimacy evidenced in other Lukan stories about Jesus and his converts.[83]

The sequential relationship and dependence between the loving actions of the woman and the forgiveness of her sins is a matter of considerable debate;[84] this, in turn, affects both the unity and interpretation of the account. There are two clauses that make the reading difficult. The first one is οὗ χάριν, the translation of which can either point to what had been inferred from the parable, i.e. that forgiveness results in loving gratitude, ("for this reason I tell you" [οὗ χάριν λέγω σοι][85]) or to the woman's loving actions themselves, ("because of which [I tell you] her sins have been forgiven" [οὗ χάριν [λέγω σοι] ἀφέωνται αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῆς]). The second one is the clause introduced by ὅτι, which can either be translated as "because" or "as is evidenced by the fact that".[86] The first of the two possible translations is justified on the basis of the woman's

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[83] After following Jesus' call to follow him, Levi holds a banquet for Jesus (5:29) which provokes the criticism of the Pharisees and their scribes (5:30). In the parable of the lost son, the repentant son is at the celebration (15:22-24) while the older one refused to go in (15:28). Jesus tells Zacchaeus that he must go to his house, to which he responds gladly (19:5-6), and the people reprove that association (19:7).

[84] On the relationship Luke has established between forgiveness and love with regard to the actions and motivations of the woman, there are, on the one hand, those who consider forgiveness as the consequence of her love (cf. Schürmann, Das Lukasevangelium I [1969] 436-8; Spicq, Agapé dans le Nouveau Testament I [1958] 120-37; Lagrange, St Luc [1941^5] 231-2; Creed, St Luke [1930] 110-1; Wellhausen, Das Evangelium Lucae [1904] 32. On the other hand, there are those who consider her love as the consequence of forgiveness (cf. Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 313; Bock, Luke BECNT [1994] 703; Evans, Saint Luke [1990] 363; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 686-7; Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 313; Wilckens, "Vergebung für die Sünderin," [1973] 404-11; Caird, St Luke [1963] 114-5; Jeremias, Parables [1972] 127; Schmid, Lukas RNT [1960^4] 148-9; Schlatter, Das Evangelium des Lukas [1960^2] 236-7).

[85] BAA 1750; BAGD 877.

[86] Bovon, Saint Luc (1991) 384-5; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978); Moule, Idiom-Book (1953) 147.

great love which brings about her forgiveness. Such a position is supported by the aorist ἠγάπησεν (7:47), which refers to the previous actions of the woman.[87] Therefore, forgiveness becomes, according to this line of argument, the consequence of love.

However, the parable itself does not allow for such an interpretation, which even some of those who interpret ὅτι as causal concede.[88] Thus it may be concluded here that both οὗ χάριν and ὅτι refer to the love of the woman that results from the forgiveness of her sins by Jesus. In Fitzmyer's words "the clause states not the reason for the forgiveness but rather why the forgiveness is known to exist".[89] Ἀγαπάω is the reaction after forgiveness has been granted. It is identified as gratitude. "Love is the way in which gratitude is expressed".[90]

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[87] Cf. 1 Peter 4:8: "love covers a multitude of sins", and Matt 6:14-15: "for if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (also, Pr 10:12; 1 Clem 49:5; Sir 17:22; Dan 4:27). However, the soteriological stance of 1 Peter does not allow for an interpretation of 4:8 as works of love resulting in forgiveness of sins (cf. 1:18-20; 2:24-25) (*contra* Brox, Der erste Petrusbrief [1979] 205; Kelly, Peter and Jude [1969] 178). It should be seen from a theological point of view as referring to the love of God and its saving effect. Since God's love forgives sins, the recipients of such forgiving love must act accordingly (cf. Thurén, Argument and Theology in 1 Peter [1995] 169). Goppelt argues for an ambivalent reading of the dictum to show "the circular movement between the love we encounter and the love we pass on, which, according to the Jesus tradition, goes forth from God (Mk 11:25; Mt 6:14f; 18:35)" (Goppelt, I Peter [1993] 298. See also, Beare, The First Epistle of Peter [1970³] 184-5; Cranfield, I and II Peter and Jude [1960] 114-5). 1 Peter 4:8 is an emphatic invitation to practise brotherly love. Concerning the Matthean verses, they are not part of the Lord's prayer but are linked to the fifth petition "forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt 6:12). Hagner points out that Matt 6:14-15 should not be read as if saying that God's forgiveness of us firstly depend on our forgiveness of others (Hagner, Matthew 1-13 [1993] 152; cf. Moule, "...As We Forgive...," [1982] 278-86; Harner, Understanding the Lord's Prayer [1975] 100-6). The emphasis of the Matthean text is on the link between God's forgiveness and human forgiveness, even though God's forgiveness comes first (cf. Matt 18:23-35).

[88] Schürmann, Lukasevangelium I (1969) 436-8.

[89] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 692.

[90] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 311.

Bock deals with the connection between spiritual condition and actions, so that the actions of the woman reflect her response to God.[91]

And yet, Neale shows that there is no need to deny or neutralise the difficulties present in the text. 7:47 brings both positions into coexistence, and, by doing so Luke's theological interest and emphasis on repentance and forgiveness for the sinner are retained,[92] without the necessity for presupposing any previous encounter between the woman and Jesus to make sense of the difficulties in the story. Thus Neale argues that, while verses 36-39 describe the woman's repentance through her actions, which may even appear as the condition of her forgiveness, verses 40-43 show that love is the consequence of forgiveness. It is, then, in 7:47, that the two clauses come together. On the one hand, the narrative focuses on the woman's repentance (7:47a,b) while, on the other hand, the parable focuses in the creditor's forgiveness (7:47c). "The gracious forgiveness which is the point of the parable is connected to the penitent behaviour of the sinful woman".[93] Therefore, there are two emphases shown in the account, namely, repentance and forgiveness, which go together with Luke's emphasis on forgiveness as part of the divine salvific initiative present in the ministry of Jesus and repentance as the expected response to that initiative.

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[91] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 704.

[92] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 145.

[93] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 146.

The love displayed by the woman is said to be πολύ, which is the result of her πολλαί sins being forgiven. In contrast with that, Jesus affirms that the one who loves ὀλίγον is the one to whom ὀλίγον is forgiven.[94] The question is about how this relates to the attitude and situation of the Pharisee. It is certainly not the case that Jesus perceives any sign of repentance in the Pharisee. It is basically a rhetorical expression[95] drawn from the parable itself, for Simon has not responded yet to the preaching of Jesus, and so there is no way to make any link between his attitude and any manifestation of forgiveness and love.[96] Marshall finds the sentence "formal and theoretical", although he is open to considering a connection when he states that those loving little are in fact those who are not aware of the magnitude of their sin and, therefore, their need for forgiveness.[97]

From the contrast between the Pharisee, a religious leader not "affected" by the preaching of the Kingdom, and a sinful woman, who positively responded to it, there is a thematic connection with other conversion stories, which brings about apophthegms by Jesus like "those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (5:32; cf. 19:10).[98] It also resembles the criticism of Jesus by

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[94] Seesemann, "ὀλίγος," TDNT 5.172.

[95] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 705.

[96] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 359.

[97] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 313; also, Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 705.

[98] Marshall sees this contrast between the lack of love evidenced by the Pharisee and the love evidenced by the sinful woman as "the central feature in the story" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 304).

religious leaders for his befriending sinners (5:30; 7:34; 15:1-2; 19:7). If all the central and emphatic contrasts are reduced to a mere lack of knowledge by Simon of the woman's new status,[99] then the power and sharpness of the story fade away. Its power lies in the fact that even though she is a sinner, Jesus gracefully accepts her. But, on the basis of the forgiveness of the woman granted in this present encounter, there is no need to deprive the passage of its force, that is, its Lukan emphasis on the ministry of Jesus of forgiveness to the sinner.

The resulting situation of the present account is a status reversal of the two ideologically characterised individuals, namely, the sinful woman and the Pharisee.[100] She was a social outcast, outside the religious boundaries the Pharisee represents and exemplifies but, on the basis of their attitude towards Jesus, the roles reverse. Her behaviour, at first considered as shameful, makes her attitude acceptable to Jesus for what it represents - i.e. repentance and acceptance of his message.[101] On the other hand, the Pharisee, who at first appeared as the acceptable character, becomes the outsider, the one not responding to the message of Jesus,[102] and therefore is depicted in a negative light.[103]

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[99] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 314.

[100] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 147.

[101] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 144.

[102] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 708.

[103] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 136-7.

In such a polarised situation between the actions of both the Pharisee and the woman and the consequences drawn from them by Jesus, which link with the contrasting picture of Pharisees and sinners portrayed in the previous passage (7:24-35), the reversals present are well attested. Such reversals derive from the different responses to and attitudes towards Jesus, "much love" (ὅτι ἠγάπησεν πολύ), "little love" (ὀλίγον ἀγαπᾷ) (7:47). Hence, while Simon's signs of hospitality towards a guest whom he is supposed to be honouring appear to be minor, the actions of the woman represent a way of acknowledging and granting honour to Jesus (7:44-46). It is the honourable host who fails to honour Jesus while the shameless woman does not. As a consequence, the actions of the woman, who was a sinner and so a religious outsider, in contrast with Simon who is an insider qualified to pass judgement on others, are interpreted by Jesus as signs of her repentance. She sees in Jesus the prophet that Simon denies. And on the basis of such recognition and repentance, Jesus accepts her, that is, forgives her and includes her among his followers. In light of the new reality of the Kingdom, she is no longer an outsider but Simon is, by failing to accept Jesus and his ministry. Simon's criticism implied in the dishonouring of Jesus proves to be wrong, and it is now the woman who gains honour through Jesus.[104]

[104] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 125-7.

The Lukan story manifests a process of what have been called defamiliarisation of norms.[105] Such a process questions "automatized", familiar, conventional perceptions of things. In our story, the conventional idea, the automatized perspective, is that a pious person does not associate with sinners. This is the position held by Simon the Pharisee. The defamiliarisation of the story makes the actions of the sinful woman look more natural while Simon's omissions become odd.[106] The power of the contrasts brought up in the account is the result of the difference between the "story" and the "plot".[107] Thus, the story is the familiar, the conventional, while the distorted way of telling it is the plot.

To give a more visual account of this notion, Resseguie says that

> the story can be outlined as follows:
> 1. A Pharisee invites Jesus for dinner.
> 2. The host omits customary amenities for his guest.
> 3. A sinful woman enters and performs lavish acts of hospitality.
> 4. Simon objects.
> 5. Jesus confronts Simon.
> 6. Jesus pronounces the woman's forgiveness.
>
> However, the narrative withholds the damaging information in #2 until Jesus confronts Simon in #5. Thus the plot of Luke 7 is 1, 3, 4, 5, 2, 6.[108]

From this line of argument, the narrative first leads to a positive view on the Pharisee and a negative one on the woman, while at the moment of highest

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[105] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 221. Defamiliarisation is "the creative distortion of a familiar object or a routine convention to make it appear strange and unfamiliar" (Resseguie, "Automatization," [1991] 137).

[106] Resseguie, "Automatization," (1991) 144.

[107] According to Resseguie, "the story is the chronological/casual sequence of events", and "the plot is the story as it is actually told or the manner in which the events are linked together" ("Automatization," [1991] 145).

[108] Resseguie, "Automatization," (1991) 145.

tension (7:39-43) it indicates Simon's deficient actions (7:44-46).[109] Such a new situation made Simon's actions look irregular and those of the woman normal, and accordingly their status in the story altered.[110] Once again, Luke presents a status reversal in the situation of the characters involved in the story, on the basis of their attitude towards Jesus.[111] A kind of concurrent inference from this is that the initially positive presentation of the Pharisee was done deliberately by Luke to intensify the coming contrast between the attitude of the Pharisee and that of the woman. There is, then, no justification for the view that this story advances the Pharisee as positively disposed towards Jesus. For Luke, the Pharisee provides Jesus with poor hospitality, denies him honour, and rejects his mission.

5.7 THE GRANTING OF SALVATION (7:48-50)

After the words of Jesus to Simon about the woman, Jesus now tells her that her sins are forgiven (v. 48). It is the first time that Jesus talks to the woman, since all the conversation so far has been a dialogue between him and Simon. Now the woman hears directly from Jesus that she is forgiven, something implicitly acknowledged in his acceptance of her actions and brought up in the discussion with Simon. It is also the first time that a particular sinner is forgiven after the mission statement by Jesus in 5:32, where he affirmed that he

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[109] Tannehill, Narrative Unity (1986) 116-7.

[110] Resseguie, "Automatization," (1991) 145.

[111] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 124-5.

had come to call sinners to repentance.[112] Luke uses the theological passive here, to imply that it is God who forgives her sins, for it is God's initiative that has brought the woman eschatological forgiveness, as was announced by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth (4:18-21).[113] Since the majority of scholars argue for the actual forgiveness having taken place during a previous meeting with Jesus, these words should be taken as reassurance to the woman.[114]

However, Nolland acknowledges the difficulty at this point, "namely, the apparent bestowing of forgiveness on one who is already forgiven"[115] and Evans, even though he also supports the theory of the woman's forgiveness in a previous encounter with Jesus, acknowledges that such a statement "hence loses much of its force".[116] The problem becomes even greater when looking at the previous occasion in which Jesus utters a quasi-identical sentence. It is in 5:20, at the healing of a paralytic to whom Jesus says ἀφέωνταί σοι αἱ ἁμαρτίαι σου. It was at that very moment that forgiveness took place. Not even the linguistic explanation of ἀφέωνται (7:48) as the same perfect tense found in 7:47, which speaks of forgiveness as something already existing, is sufficient to explain the forgiveness of the sins of the woman by referring to a previous encounter with Jesus. The parallel in 5:20 allows it to be otherwise.

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[112] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 147.

[113] Bovon, Saint Luc (1991) 241-2.

[114] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 705; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 314.

[115] Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 359.

[116] Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 364.

Furthermore, if the woman has been forgiven in a previous meeting with Jesus, his words here are just of reassurance. But, why does Jesus have to repeat them to her? Was the hypothetical granting of forgiveness insufficient in the previous encounter? Are the words of Jesus to Simon about the forgiven state of the woman not enough? Was a third declaration by Jesus to the woman about her forgiveness necessary? Certainly, such insistence gives the impression that it is more an imposition of forgiveness, or that Jesus, after all, plays Simon's game of disregarding the woman herself and making her a mere object of discussion.[117]

The reaction of the people sharing Simon's table with Jesus comes without delay. They have heard Jesus uttering the forgiveness of her sins to the woman, and they become perplexed. "Who is this who even forgives sins?" (Τίς οὗτός ἐστιν ὃς καὶ ἁμαρτίας ἀφίησιν; 7:49). However, the level of confrontation in the reaction of the other guests is somehow lower than that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law in 5:21, in which they accuse Jesus of blasphemy. Nonetheless, the way Luke presents the averse reaction of these people (λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) resembles that of Simon the Pharisee (εἶπεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ), both because it is kept to themselves and because it is a rejection of Jesus' role. Thus, the essence of the question is Jesus' own identity.[118]

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[117] Green argues that the words of Jesus are not intended as reassurance of the woman's forgiveness, but directed to the other guests, who question the action of Jesus (Luke NICNT [1997] 314). Nonetheless, it seems strange that once that Jesus finally talks to the woman he is not really talking to her but to the other guests!

[118] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 304.

Green shows that the issue of the identity of Jesus is a relevant topic during his ministry in Galilee, in which related questions abound (cf. 4:22, 36; 5:21; 7:16, 19-20, 39, 49; 8:25; 9:9, 18, 20).[119] Nonetheless, Jesus does not answer the question on his identity put by the other guests, and it will remain unanswered until 9:20, 22. There, a full christological declaration about the identity of Jesus is given near the end of his Galilean ministry. He is God's Messiah (cf. 2:26, 29-32). Luke also portrays Jesus as a prophet but with divine authority beyond any other, since there is no Old Testament reference to prophets forgiving sins but only uttering God's forgiveness (cf. 2 Sam 12:13; Is 40:2).[120] The authority of Jesus to forgive sins has already been established elsewhere (5:24), after being questioned by Pharisees and scribes (5:21). Jesus is presented as accepting sinners and forgiving their sins[121] in line with the eschatological purpose of God (cf. Luke 4:18-19; 7:19-22). Jesus is God's agent of salvation.[122] Further reference to the prophet like Moses analogy (cf. Deut 18:15-18; Acts 7:35-37)[123] and texts like 24:19-21, in which Jesus is described as a prophet, who was crucified and was expected to have redeemed Israel, show how both titles, prophet and Messiah go together in Luke. Therefore "as

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[119] Green, Theology (1995) 61.

[120] The Qumran fragment of "The Prayer of Nabonidus" (4Q242) refers to the sins of king Nabonidus of Babylon that had been forgiven by a Jewish exorcist (in Vermes, CDSSE [1997] 573). Nevertheless, no mention is made as to how it happened and whether it differs from the actions of other Old Testament prophets as messengers of divine forgiveness. The only clear inference comes from the fact that the king makes a contrast with his previous allegiance to other gods which, on the basis of his healing and forgiveness, he questions. It all points to the exorcist as a mediator of divine forgiveness, and therefore there is no difference from the *modus operandi* of other Old Testament prophets. Besides, the eschatological character of Jesus' forgiveness is not present in this Qumran fragment.

[121] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 304; Quanbeck, "Forgiveness," IDB 2.314-9, esp. 318.

[122] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 486.

[123] On Jesus as the prophet like Moses, see Marshall, Historian and Theologian (1988) 126-7.

the eschatological prophet, Jesus is the Messiah".[124] It is a christological emphasis highly relevant to the passage in question here for it shows that Luke is interested in presenting Jesus' role as the bearer of eschatological salvation, which he confers on the woman.

The final words of Jesus are for the woman. Nothing more is said about or by Simon or any of the other guests.[125] And so the action reaches its climax when Jesus expressly grants the woman the forgiveness of her sins (7:48).[126] This has provoked the other guests to cast their doubts and express their rejection. They react to what Jesus now confirms with other words (cf. 5:20-24), namely, that

[124] Marshall, Historian and Theologian (1988) 127. In his article "The Works of the Messiah," (1994, 98-112), Collins studies 4Q521, one of the few pre-Christian texts referring to a "messiah" or "anointed one". This text consists of 17 fragments, of which Collins translates and analyses fragments 2 and 4. The eschatological actions described in this text, which incorporates Isaiah 61:1-2, are ascribed to God. However, it is an anointed prophet who will perform them, according to the Isaiah text. Collins argues that since a messianic figure is introduced in the first line of the fragment and on the basis of the reference to Isaiah 61:1 where it is God's anointed prophet who is the one who will carry out such actions, what we have in 4Q521 is a reference to "the agency of a prophetic messiah in line 12" (Collins, "The Works of the Messiah," [1994] 100). Even though there are few references to the anointing of prophets in the Hebrew Bible (i.e. 1 King 19:6), in the Dead Sea Scrolls, nevertheless, prophets are called anointed ones (cf. CD 2.12; 1QM 11:7). Thus, in line 12 of 4Q521, Collins sees a reference to the prophetic messiah as agent of God's actions. Another parallel to 4Q521 is 11QMelchizedek, where the activity of the anointed prophet becomes that of Melchizedek. Consequently, "the year of the Lord's favour" (Is 61:2) turns into "Melchizedek's year of favour" (11QMelch 2:9). The herald "who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation..." (11QMelch 2:15-16, cf. Is 52:7) is the one anointed of the Spirit, a similar description to that used for the prophets (cf. Dan 9:25; CD 2:12). Collins goes on in his tracing of literary parallels to argue in favour of the messianic-prophet figure and examines the New Testament. When the disciples of John the Baptist question Jesus on John's behalf about whether he, Jesus, is the expected messiah (Luke 7:19; *contra* Fitzmyer [Luke AB (1981) 664] who does not see here a messianic question at issue), Jesus' answer evokes the role of the anointed prophet of Is 61:1 (cf. Luke 7:22). Thus, according to Collins' interpretation of 4Q521 and its parallels, the messiah is an eschatological prophet. This correlation between the figures of messiah and prophet correspond with that of Jesus in the story of the conversion of the sinful woman, where he is portrayed as both eschatological prophet and messiah.

[125] According to Gowler there are four reasons why Simon is silent: (1) The narrator is only interested in the Pharisee as a means to an end, namely, to enhance the contrast, not his response; (2) Simon can still repent, for Jesus' interest in despised people does not prevent him from reaching out to other higher sectors of society. "They too needed the gospel" (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 308); (3) Leaving pending questions as a literary device used in parables; (4) His negative answer is presumed (cf. 7:30) (Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 222).

[126] Tannehill, Narrative Unity (1986) 116.

her sins are forgiven and that she is saved through faith,[127] as is shown by her loving actions. Otherwise, it would be the third time that Jesus had declared the woman's salvation in this account, something surprising and without any precedent in the gospels and excessive in a situation in which the person was previously enjoying such grace.

There are, however, more connotations implied in the salvific declaration of Jesus to the woman than just a rewording of a previous statement. The declaration ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε is related to the healings of Jesus (Cf. Mark 5:34 (par. Matt 9:22; Luke 8:48); Mark 10:52 [par. Luke 18:42[, Luke 7:50; 17:19), which, as Foerster points out, is not just a declaration of the healing of the affected part of the body, but of the whole person.[128] There is no physical healing related to the story of the sinful woman in physical terms, but

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[127] "The pericope stands as a 'proclamation of the grace of God to sinners' and establishes 'faith as fundamental to salvation (through the forgiveness of sins)'" (Buckwalter, Christology [1996] 150-1). However, references to "faith" in the third gospel can be divided into two main groups, one is the physical healing stories in which restoration results from faith (cf. healing of a paralytic, 5:20; healing of the centurion's servant, 7:9; healing of the woman who touches Jesus' clothes, 8:48; healing of a leper, 17:19; healing of a blind man, 18:42) and another is the group of those other instances in which the presence and measure of faith is undermined (cf. "where is your faith?", 8:25; "you of little faith!", 12:28; "increase our faith!" 17:5, "if you had faith" 17:6; "will he find faith on earth?" 18:8; "that your own faith may not fail", 23:42). The occasion presented here in the words of Jesus to the woman follows the pattern found in other healings; "your faith has saved you" (cf. 8:48; 17:19; 18:42. See, Schweizer, Luke [1984] 139) although what the story emphasises is the forgiveness of her sins, not her healing (Foerster, "σῴζω," TDNT 7.990). Although it is not an account of a physical healing, Marshall recalls the church tradition that identifies the woman of 7:36-50 with Mary Magdalene, healed by Jesus of "evil spirits and infirmities" (8:2) (Marshall, Historian and Theologian [1988³] 95 n.1). Luke shows different ways in which to appropriate salvation, as for example through healings or conversion. In the third gospel, in the healing stories, salvation is explicitly linked to faith. The connection between faith and the reception of salvation through conversion becomes unambiguous in Acts (i.e. 14:23; 15:11; 16:31; 19:4; 20:21; 26:18; 24:24), as also with baptism (i.e. 2:38, 41; 8:12-13; 8:36-37; 16:15; 16:31-33; 18:8) and the Holy Spirit (i.e. 2:33, 38; 10:44-45, 47; 15:8-9; 19:2). It may seem a very subtle distinction, but it is both a helpful and necessary way to identify the different issues involved in order to distinguish the various ways in which Luke portrays them and how they develop from the gospel to Acts. Frequently these distinctions are merged and harmonised by scholars who tend to treat topics in unison under the "Luke-Acts" umbrella.

[128] Foerster, "σῴζω," TDNT 7.990.

the implications of being saved through faith reflect the healing or restoration of the woman in socio-religious terms. She is no more a sinner, and therefore, no more an outcast and an outsider according to the values of the Kingdom. The implications are not just relevant to the woman as an individual, but to the community of Jesus' followers to which she now belongs.[129] Finally, Jesus sends her away in peace,[130] which is a common Jewish greeting, but here, in the context of eschatological forgiveness, refers to the salvation "that has come as a historical event through Jesus Christ."[131] Thus the account of the conversion of the sinful woman concludes with Jesus emphasising salvation and peace, two distinctive elements of the Christ event.[132]

5.8 CONCLUSION

The majority view of scholars proposes that Jesus has granted forgiveness to the woman at a prior meeting, an event the readers are to presuppose in order to follow the main thrust of the story. The arguments for the opposite view propounded here, which allow the view of a conferring of salvation at this encounter between Jesus and the woman, are: (1) Without the need to presuppose a prior encounter between Jesus and the woman, the previous co-text provides us with the necessary information to put the account into

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[129] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 314.

[130] On "peace" in Luke, see Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 224-5.

[131] Foerster, "εἰρήνη," TDNT 2.413; cf. Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 314.

[132] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 687.

perspective, namely, that Jesus receives, accepts, and therefore forgives sinners. (2) That the woman in the story is a sinner is clearly asserted by the narrator, the Pharisee, Jesus (at least implicitly), and the other guests. Also the argument centers around the actual forgiveness of her sins, which brings about the displeased reaction of both the Pharisee and the other guests. (3) The forgiveness of the sinful woman is the first occasion in which the ministry statement by Jesus in 5:32 "to call sinners to repentance" becomes concrete in an individual. Therefore, the christological emphases intended by Luke in this story would lose sharpness if, after all, the whole discussion and conflict was not about the authority of Jesus to forgive sins but about a lack of information on the part of Simon and the other guests about the previous encounter between Jesus and the woman. Hence, "Luke's entire story vividly portrays the redemptive themes of repentance, forgiveness of sins, and salvation"[133] which otherwise would seem out of place when applied to a woman already forgiven.

The present study of Luke 7:36-50 has attempted to show that "it is a story of conversion,"[134] a topic of fundamental importance for Luke. Basic elements in Luke's theology are present here, relevant to the search for a Lukan paradigm of conversion. Thus, God's gracious initiative is displayed in Jesus' acceptance of the "touching" and actions of a sinful woman. The situation in the account becomes conflictive because of the antagonistic understandings between Jesus

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[133] Buckwalter, Christology (1996) 151.

[134] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 306.

and the Pharisee as to who is a "sinner". Jesus welcomes the woman who shows her repentance and receives forgiveness from Jesus. It is a conflict "around the table" in which the actions of the woman depict the role of the host and reflect the intimacy of the Jesus fellowship. The opposition of the Pharisee and other guests to Jesus' attitude provokes a dialogue that manifests the reversal in the situation of both the woman and the Pharisee from the perspective of the Kingdom. Jesus concludes with a soteriological statement to the woman that also reflects a christological emphasis.

It can be argued that one further element is missing, namely, the financial component present in all but one Lukan conversion stories.[135] However, Luke 8:1-3 must be considered as a logical progression of the present account so that both stories should be read in correlation, as Johnson has shown.[136] In fact, in the context of Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom, Luke 8:1-3 speaks of women who, having been counted as sinners and therefore as social outcasts and outsiders, have subsequently been healed by Jesus. These women are now included among the followers of Jesus and they show their new status and allegiance to the Kingdom by using their possessions for the support of the group. The refocusing of financial means is a sign of the new reality of the convert.

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[135] Of the seven Lukan conversion stories that are treated in this thesis, the financial factor is present in 3:1-17; 5:27-32; 7:36-50 (cf. 8:1-3); 15:11-32; 18:18-30; 19:1-10; while it is absent in 23:39-43.

[136] Johnson, Possessions (1977) 102-3.

In the story of the conversion of the woman of the city, there is no reference to her possessions. Some have argued that the alabaster jar of ointment that she brought to Jesus is a sign of a new use of her possessions, namely, what she used before for her sinful activity, she now offers to Jesus. Others argue that she is actually the Mary Magdalene of 8:2,[137] which would create a direct link between the two stories, and then provide the financial reference missing in 7:36-50. However, it is enough to see that these two uniquely Lukan passages (7:36-50 and 8:1-3) belong together, for 8:1-3 has its thematic affinity with what comes before and not so much with what follows. Jesus receives (women who are) sinners, to whom he offers acceptance, salvation and inclusion in the Kingdom. To that they respond with repentance, which shows in their new approach to their possessions. All this, according to Luke, amounts to conversion.

[137] Feuillet, "Octions," (1975) 357-94.

6. A PARABLE OF CONVERSION (Luke 15:11-32)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Luke presents his emphasis on conversion through different stories that either are unique to his gospel[1] or that he has received from tradition but that he edits[2] in such a way that convey his theological thrust. Distinct among such stories is the one in 15:11-32 for it is presented in a parable form, and is part of triad of parables Jesus tells in response to the accusation muttered by Pharisees and scribes because of his welcoming of toll collectors and sinners.

In the context of the introductory verses 1-3 that give unity and thematic coherence to the three parables of chapter 15, the emphasis of the parable of the prodigal son has to be both in consonance with the criticism of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law that motivate it and with the concerns of the two previous parables which are also part of the reply.[3] However, the parable of the lost son is more elaborate than the two previous ones, enlarges the scope of the intended meaning and is open ended in order to allow the reader to respond accordingly.

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[1] "The Conversion of a Woman of the City" (7:36-50); "The Conversion of Zacchaeus" (19:1-10); "The Conversion of a Criminal" (23:38-43).

[2] "The Conversion of Levi" (5:27-32); "The (non-)Conversion of a Ruler" (18:18-30).

[3] Different emphases have been noted in the parable by scholars. It is: (1) it is in praise of God's mercy (Westermann, Parables of Jesus [1990] 185); (2) an invitation to rejoice over the finding of what was lost (Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 251); (3) divine love that goes out and seeks the lost (Manson, Sayings [1949] 284); (4) a matter of different responses to the finding of the lost (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 578); (5) a justification of the attitude of God to sinners (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 604).

Jesus' answer to the criticism of the Pharisees and the scribes in all three parables is not an explicit defence of his own actions but is articulated within a larger theological frame, namely, the heavenly joy resulting from the repenting lost-and-found one. It does not matter that the first two parables are limited in their picturing of repentance, for neither a sheep nor a coin can repent, but the concluding summaries to both parables make the message absolutely clear. God seeks for the lost and rejoices after he or she has been found.

The sources for Luke 15 are disputed, and the major agreements can be summarised as follows. Verses 1-2 are part of Luke's redactional work, with a wording probably influenced by his own editing in 5:29-32 of Mark 2:15-17.[4] Luke's redactional style is also evident in verse 3 (cf. 4:23; 5:36), in which παραβολή is used in the singular even if referring to more than one parable. This is what has been called "a parabolic discourse".[5] The first parable, "The Lost Sheep" (15:4-7), comes probably from *Q*,[6] while the second one, "The

[4] There is general consensus about this point (i.e. Nolland, Luke WBC [1993a] 769; Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 599; Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," [1971] 185-9; Dupont, Les Béatitudes II [1969] 233-7; Bultmann, History [1963] 171, 334-5). Grundmann argues that vv. 1-3 formed a unity with vv. 11-32, to which two parables were added at a second stage in the pre-Lukan tradition (Lukas [1963] 304). Farmer claims that the language in vv. 1-2 is not Lukan, and so these introductory verses are pre-Lukan ("Literary and Form-critical Analysis," [1961-62] 301-16). Against this claim, see Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," (1971) 185-9.

[5] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 600. Cf. Lagrange, St Luc (1941[5]) 416; Grundmann, Lukas (1963) 305.

[6] Cf. Matthew 18:12-14. Bultmann considers the Matthean version more original since the Lukan one shows evidence of his redactional work in providing a thematic unity for the three parables in ch. 15, thus using ἀπολέσας and ἀπολωλὸς instead of the allegedly more original πλανηθῇ and πλανῶμενον (Bultmann, History [1963] 171). *Contra* Jeremias, Parables (1972) 40, 42, 69-70, 103, 177.

Lost Coin" (15:8-10), is attributed by some scholars to Luke's own source.[7] Yet, the evidence is here far from conclusive.

Nonetheless, the three parables are to be seen as a unity on the basis of the structure and lack of change in topic, topography or audience.[8] The theme also shows the unity of this section for it presents a criticism towards Jesus because of his welcoming of and fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, to which he responds with the three parables.[9] Furthermore, the three parables coincide in their similar emphasis, namely, the joy of finding what is lost,[10] that is celebrated by the community (cf. 15:6-7, 9-10, 23-24, 32). York emphasises the verbal connection between the parables with the linking words ἀπόλλυμι (15:4 [x2], 6, 8, 9, 17, 24, 32) and εὑρίσκω (15: 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 [x2], 24, 32).[11] Fitzmyer argues that these two terms are part of Luke's redactional work, linking the third parable to the previous two.[12] Not less thematically important is

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[7] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 146; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1073; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 598; Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," (1971) 185-9; Farmer, "Literary and Form-critical Analysis," (1961-62) 310-16. *Contra* Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1961) 103; Drury, Tradition and Design (1976) 155-7, who consider Luke as the author of the parable of the Lost Coin on the basis that Jesus could have not repeated himself and that the pair of parables could not have been separated by the application. However, the non-Lukan language of the parables may indicate that they come from Luke's source(s). Bock argues that the parable of the Lost Coin is so "unfitting" and the example so exaggerated that Lukan creation is improbable (Bock, Luke BECNT [1994] 1296). Both parables are very similar and there is in both a need for an application. Had the concluding summaries been added to them it would have probably been at a second stage of the gospel tradition. There is another example of pair of parables in 13:18-21 also with a man and a woman as the main characters. Interestingly, this pairing of woman and man is a Lukan characteristic, according to D'Angelo ("Women in Luke-Acts," [1990] 443-8).

[8] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 579.

[9] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 597.

[10] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 597. Rasco, similarly, signals the joy experienced by God when he recovers what he has lost as the motif of these parables ("Les Paraboles de Luc XV," [1967] 165-83). Joy is attributed to God himself in the concluding verse of each of the first two parables (7, 10).

[11] Cf. York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 146.

[12] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1090; cf. Klostermann, Das Lukasevangelium (1929) 160.

"repentance", which is also a characteristic emphasis of all three parables in describing the one who after being lost is now found (15:7, 10, 18) and also of Luke's theology.

With regard to the way chapter 15 relates to its literary context, Farmer finds the same formal structure with 13:1-7, together with the theme of repentance for the sinner.[13] It is in 13:3, 5 that Neale finds a turning point in Luke's presentation of sinners from those socially despised (cf. 5.29; 7.36-50) or reprobated (cf. 6.32-34; 10.13-15; 13.2, 4) to one "who has an inherent need for God (13.3, 5)."[14] The emphasis Luke wants to convey to his audience is that all are sinners and need forgiveness, which in turn is only granted through repentance. "The partly sociological, partly ideological 'sinner' of the Gospel tradition has become a vehicle for a universal call to repentance, a call which includes the Gospel audience."[15] Thus, according to Luke, all people are sinners in need of repentance, regardless of any other consideration.[16] This

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[13] Farmer, " Literary and Form-critical Analysis," (1961-2) 313-6.

[14] Neale, None but the Sinner (1991) 153.

[15] Neale, None but the Sinner (1991) 153-4.

[16] This has been already shown in the treatment of Luke 3:1-17, where the preaching of John of a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins challenges any self-justification on the basis of any ethnically bound claims. The message is thus clear, eschatological judgement is not avoided, nor is salvation attained by means of ethnic claims or religious affiliation. It is the result of repentance shown through ethical deeds. It was already present in the words of Simeon to Mary about the newly born child in which he said that he was "destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel" (2:34), an affirmation that would agree with the words of Mary about God's raising of the low and humbling of those in high positions (1:51-53). Jesus evidences the division of the people according to their response to God in him (see, Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 149) when saying that he had come to bring division on earth instead of peace (12:51). The positions are clearly set out for "he who is not with me [Jesus] is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters" (11:23), which is a Lukan editing of the more inclusive Markan version "whoever is not against us is for us" (9:40). Any belief on the "universal salvation of Israel" (see, Cavallin, Life after Death [1974] 177, who argues it was a common Jewish conviction; cf. MSanh 10:1) is challenged by Luke's emphasis on the need for the repentance of all (13:3, 5), for all are equally sinners (13:2). This is uniquely Lukan in the Gospels, for it goes beyond the recurrent rationale for repentance because of the coming of the kingdom (Cf. Matt 3:2; 4:17; Mark

emphasis becomes fundamental in the interpretation of the characterisation of the Pharisees and scribes both in this chapter as well as in the third Gospel as a whole.

In chapter 14, also as a response to the attitudes of Pharisees and experts in the law, Jesus is found emphasising the divine concern and initiative on behalf of outcasts by his exhortation to the host to select his guests from among those people (14:12-14). The attitude of the elder son in the parable of 15:11-32 can also be compared to that of those invited guests who reject the invitation (14:18-20), while the outlook of the father resembles that of the man hosting the banquet who extended the invitation to those at the margins of society (14:15-24). Such meals are beyond conventional norms, and this is also the case in the celebration of a banquet after the return of the younger son (15:22-24).

Looking at material following chapter 15, it can be said that there is a connection between the first attitude of the younger son and that of the unjust steward who is accused of wasting his manager's possessions (16:1).[17]

1:14-15). The door is then open for an emphasis on individual repentance over against an emphasis on the repentance of an entire people (cf. Neale, None but the Sinners [1991] 151-2; Carlston, Parables of the Triple Tradition [1975] 60; Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke [1960] 227). This is not, however, a move away from any sense of community in Luke, for it is a strong emphasis in the third Gospel that because of repentance and forgiveness the individual joins the eschatological community of Jesus' followers. Repentance has to be shown in the deeds of the one who repents, which in Luke means either giving up wealth or a right use of it for the sake of community welfare (3:12-14; 8:1-3; 19:1-10; cf. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37). The different reversals in Luke turn outsiders (i.e. tax collectors and sinners) into insiders, at least within the boundaries of the Jesus' group and the kingdom.

[17] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 598.

Donahue sees a connection with chapter 16 in the attitude towards material goods as an indicator of deeper realities, namely, "freed[om] from slavery to wealth *and* from servile fear of God".[18] The issue of the salvation of the "lost" is also present at this final stage in the travel narrative in the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus in the summary statement justifying Jesus' fellowship with a "sinner" (cf. 19:1-10, esp. 10).[19]

Fitzmyer speaks of Luke's use of his own source material to portray the image of a caring God for those people otherwise censured or rejected at the dawn of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and the passion narrative. The evidence is not just in the parables of chapter 15 but also in the stories of the dishonest steward (16:1-8); the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31); the ten lepers (17:11-19); the dishonest judge (18:1-8); the Pharisee and the toll-collector 18:9-14; and Zacchaeus (19.1-10).[20]

The study of the present chapter begins with an examination of verses 1-3 that will set the scene for the causes of the conflict that provoke the telling of the parable(s). Then, the work on the parable of "the joy of finding the lost" (vv.

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[18] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 158, 169. He sees as shared elements between the two stories: (1) the generic introduction, "there was a man" (15:11; 16:1); (2) a central character sets the course of the narrative and utters the final words of the parable (the father, 15:11, 32; the master, 16:1, 8); (3) the character providing the dramatic scene squanders property (15:13; 16:3) and (4) faces life-threatening situations (15:15-17; 16:3); (5) the turning point in the story is introduced by a soliloquy (15:17-19; 16:3-4); (6) a self-serving motivation; (7) the hoped for a reversal of the situation entitles him to be accepted into a "house"; (8) literary devices enhance the narrative tension (the return journey of the younger son and the negotiations of the steward); (9) the initiative of the action returns to the "man" mentioned in the first verse; (10) an open-ended conclusion (Gospel in Parable [1988] 167-8).

[19] See, Giblin, "Considerations on Luke 15," (1962) 15-31.

[20] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1072.

11-32) will be divided in five main sections that will analyse (1) the disruption of relationships and its causes (vv. 11-16); (2) the change of attitude of the one causing the discord (17-20a); (3 and 4) the two different attitudes towards the restoration of the broken relationship (20b-24, and 25-30); (5) the concluding argument in favour of such a restoration (31-32). The aim of the chapter is to discern what view of conversion according to Luke can be inferred from the more general framework of God's saving grace displayed in the ministry of Jesus to the outcasts.

6.2 SETTING THE SCENE (15:1-3)

The first three verses of the chapter serve as a common introduction to all three parables, where the characters, setting, conflict and response are introduced. Neale sees Luke's editorial hand at work in these verses for "the new setting lacks the features of a specific event and there is an artificial feeling to the scene."[21] Thus, there is neither a geographical nor a temporal indication for the story nor a transitional clause but a straightforward introduction to the new episode, which nonetheless is well connected with the parables.[22] Tannehill argues that table-fellowship provides the setting for the conflict in 15:1-32

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[21] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 155; cf. Bultmann, History (1963) 193, 334-5; Brawley, "Pharisees in Luke-Acts," (1978) 66-8; Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," (1971) 185, 189. *Contra* Farmer who argues that 15:1-2 is pre-Lukan ("Literary and Form-critical Analysis," [1961-1] 302).

[22] See, Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 154; Derrett, "Fresh Light," (1980) 46; Fiedler, Jesus und die Sünder (1976) 148; Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," (1971) 186-8.

since it is one of the three type-scenes[23] in which Jesus is eating with toll-collectors and sinners,[24] which provokes the criticism of Pharisees and scribes and the following response by Jesus.[25]

The hyperbolic way toll collectors and sinners are introduced is evident in the use of πάντες which is a Lukan rhetorical exaggeration[26] but also denotes Luke's emphasis on the "universal reaction of people to Jesus' activity."[27] Thus, toll collectors and sinners are consistently depicted as those responding positively to Jesus[28] and hence they all gather around to hear him (v. 1).[29] On the other side of the spectrum, Pharisees[30] and scribes[31] are introduced

[23] "A type-scene is a basic situation which recurs several times within a narrative. Each occurrence has a recognisable set of characteristics" (Tannehill, Narrative Unity [1986] 170).

[24] The combination of character such as toll collectors and sinners is a pre-Lukan one (also 5:30; 7:34). They stand for the outcast, the irreligious and the immoral.

[25] Tannehill, Narrative Unity [1986] 171; cf. 5:29-32; 15:1-32; 19:1-10. "Who would eat with whom" was a means at the time to establish and sustain social and religious boundaries. Marshall argues that Pharisees did not share table-fellowship with the sinful ones (cf. M. Ex 18:1 [65a]: 'Let not a man associate with the wicked, not even to bring him the law' [Str-B II, 108; cf. I, 498f.]. Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 599). Therefore, it was no surprise to find the Pharisees and the scribes checking on Jesus' table-fellowship (and observance of the law) in order to accuse him. Nonetheless, Jesus is portrayed as oblivious to their norms (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 571) which in turn would provoke the conflict. Such a closed approach to table fellowship becomes a means for Luke to signal those who opposed Jesus. (Green Luke NICNT [1997] 572; also, Esler, Community and Gospel [1987] 71-109).

[26] See Jeremias, "Tradition und Redaktion," (1971) 185; cf. 1:10; 6:17-19; 9:6, 43; 13:17.

[27] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 524; cf. 4:15; 5:26; 7:16-17; 9:43; 18:43; 19:37.

[28] These two groups appear in 5:30 and 7:34, in which they are also singled out by outraged Pharisees for having fellowship with Jesus.

[29] Cf. 14:35, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear." See also, 6:27, 46-49; 7:29; 8:8-21; 9:35; 10:16, 24, 39; 11:28, 31 (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 599).

[30] Although not the main target of the parables of chapter fifteen, their recipients are the Pharisees (notice the change from 14:25-35), and so "they also serve as indirect presentation of the Pharisees as characters." (Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 250).

[31] When scribes and Pharisees are presented together, they are enemies of Jesus (cf. 5:21, 30; 6:7; 7:29-30; 11:53).

grumbling[32] because of Jesus' welcoming[33] of and table-fellowship with sinners.[34] The contrasts are well established at the outset of the chapter with, on the one hand, toll collectors and sinners portrayed positively as those close to Jesus and, on the other hand, the Pharisees and scribes depicted negatively, grumbling.

Such a bipolar presentation corresponds with Luke's theological characterisation of those on the margins of social and religious acceptability as confidently responding to the preaching of Jesus and thus enjoying God's blessing while the religious leaders of the people reject God's purpose at work through Jesus.[35] According to these categories in the third Gospel and present in the introductory verses 1-2, the identification of the "lost", central to the plot of the three parables, is self-evident.[36] In addition, the identity of Jesus becomes a matter of relevance. In one more conversion story in Luke, *who Jesus is* develops out of both his activity as conveyor of God's own salvific purpose and by means of his relationship with toll collectors, sinners and others

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[32] This is the first time the word διαγογγύζειν appears both in Luke and in the New Testament. The only other mention of the word in the New Testament is also in Luke (19:7) and in both cases the grumbling expresses the disapproval of Jesus' fellowship with toll collectors and sinners. There is one more occasion where Pharisees and scribes also grumble because of Jesus' fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, but the term used there is γογγύζειν (5:30). It also echoes the grumbling of the Israelites in the desert against God's envoys, Moses and Aaron (cf. Exod 15-17; Num 14-17).

[33] The Greek term used in v. 2 to describe such a welcoming, προσδέχομαι, conveys the acceptance of hospitality as much as the offering of it, with the feasible implication of religious acceptance (cf. Donahue, Gospel in Parable [1988] 147), which in turn, it could be argued, would increase even more the indignation of Pharisees and scribes. Cf. 14:12-14.

[34] "Sinners" here is synecdoche for both toll collectors and sinners.

[35] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 251. Cf. 7:29-30.

[36] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1075.

on the margins of acceptability.[37] This in turn becomes a challenge to social codes of honour for, as it derives from the three parables of chapter 15, honour "is to be found in receiving sinners into God's family, not in only associating with respectable persons".[38] It is no difficulty, then, to see how the introduction perceives the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees and the scribes as being about his ministry to toll collectors and sinners. Pharisees once more fail to understand the ministry of Jesus, and his answer to them indicts their mistaken attitude[39] although, especially in the third parable, the invitation is open to them to join the celebration. Otherwise, Pharisees and scribes "will remain estranged from God and pitifully ignorant of God's true character".[40]

Neale deals with the question of what the point at issue is for the Pharisees, since he evaluates as wrong those approaches in New Testament scholarship[41] that, often based on Jeremias' understanding of the controversy,[42] claim that the problem that Luke presents is of people like the elder brother resisting the good news preached by Jesus. That the Pharisees did not believe in forgiveness for those who needed it is erroneous, according to Neale.[43] The aim of the

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[37] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 150.

[38] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 255.

[39] Neale, None but the Sinners (1991) 154-6. Cf. Hickling, "A Track on Jesus and the Pharisees?," (1975) 259.

[40] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 251; cf. Caird, St. Luke (1963) 184.

[41] i.e. Meyer, The Aims of Jesus (1979) 159-61; Dormeyer, "Lk. 15.1-7," (1975) 353; Hickling, "A Track on Jesus and the Pharisees?," (1975) 259; Bornkamm, Jesus (1960) 78-9; Perrin, Rediscovering (1967) 97.

[42] Jeremias, Parables (1963) 131-2.

[43] Neale refers to corrective views on the issue of by Sanders, Jesus and Judaism, (1985) 200-4; and Charlesworth, Jesus within Judaism (1988) 50; (Neale, None but the Sinners [1991] 160).

parable is the criticism of the Pharisees for the way they have neglected their duty towards the "lost"[44] and for rejecting the idea that Jesus could forgive sins.[45] Echoes of Ezek 34 resonate in the accusation of the Pharisees as negligent shepherds. God indicts his shepherds for saying: "you have not sought the lost" (34:4) and God himself will seek for them (34:11-16), a criticism that in Luke 15 focuses on the Pharisees because of their opposition to Jesus' ministry. The issue of seeking and finding the lost, central to the three parables of Luke 15, reflects God's activity displayed by Jesus.

However, it will be shown below that without needing to deny all of Neale's argument, the question still is that the Pharisees deprived the lost of forgiveness[46] and what is more poignant, they also opposed Jesus for offering it himself. Luke makes clear that rejecting the good news and its messenger is one and the same thing. That is why Jesus replies not in self-apologetic terms but by appealing to God's plan and purpose.

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[44] Neale, None but the Sinners [1991] 162. Cf. Derrett, "Fresh Light," (1980) 37; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 601; Grundmann, Lukas (1963) 307.

[45] Cf. 5:24; 7:49, although Pharisees believed that God could (5:21).

[46] Something Neale himself agrees with when saying that the Pharisees are criticised for "their inability to rejoice over the 'found' and, by extension, their failure to seek them themselves" (Neale, None but the Sinner [1991] 163).

6.3 THE PARTING OF THE WAYS (15:11-16)

The third parable starts by introducing the major characters, namely, a man[47] and his two sons. Since it is the procedure of the younger one that provokes the dramatic action of the story, he is dealt with first.[48] This younger son requests from his father his share of the property.[49] Bailey argues that such a petition is "unheard of in Eastern life and thought".[50] However, Donahue asserts that the petition of the son was "an ordinary request at the time".[51] The basis for his argument is that 4 million Jews lived in the Hellenistic Diaspora at the first century, while only half a million Jews lived in Palestine soil. Thus, due to the precarious situation of their agrarian economy in Palestine, many "younger sons emigrated",[52] a social reality that could well be behind this parable.

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[47] " Ἄνθρωπος..." It is a common way in Luke of introducing a parable in a narrative; cf. 10:30; 12:16; 14:16, 19.

[48] The election of the younger son is a biblical motif, as in the stories of Cain-Abel (Gen 4:1-5); Ishmael-Isaac (Gen 16, 21); Essau-Jacob (Gen 27:1-45); Joseph (Gen 37-48); Gideon (Judges 6:1-23); David (1 Sam 16:6-13); Solomon (1 Kings 1); Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc 3:1-9). Derrett points out that the relevance of these younger sons lies in the fact that they are chosen by God (Law in the New Testament [1970] 116-9). See also the stories of women like Deborah (Judges 4-5) and Judith, who were distant from the normal lines of power and authority but because of God's choosing they played leading roles among their people. They all stand for those who received God's gracious favour. So, according to Donahue, on the basis of these traditions Luke emphasises God's siding with those of humble state, as in the infancy narrative where characters like a priest of one of the minor grades, a barren couple, or shepherds play a distinctive role (Gospel in Parable [1988] 159). York says that it is an open question whether Luke's audience made the connection between these stories, but he thinks Jesus did (Last Shall be First [1991] 148 n.5). However, Donahue sees no intention in Jesus or in Luke in the use of such a biblical motif. For further reading on this, see Perkins, Hearing the Parables (1981) 153-4; Scott, Jesus, Symbol-Maker (1981) 49-50; Drury, Tradition and Design (1976) 75-6.

[49] The petition of the younger son to have the inheritance divided is consistent with the Middle Eastern caricature of "younger brothers" as lazy and irresponsible (LaHurd "Rediscovering the Lost Women," [1994] 67) or covetous and greedy (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 580). Cf. 12:13.

[50] Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 161-9.

[51] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 153; also, Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1087; Derrett, Law (1970) 102-9; Daube, "Inheritance," (1955) 334. Jeremias thinks that Baba Bathra viii.7 is the legal situation behind the parable (Parables [1972] 128-9).

[52] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 153; cf. Jeremias, Parables (1972) 129.

According to Jewish law, in the case of the partition of the inheritance at the death of the father (see, Num 36:7-9; 27:8-11) the oldest son would get a double share of the property division. If the partition was done during the life of the father, the younger son would only get two-ninths,[53] not of the property but of the capital. In an extreme case like the one presented in the parable in which even the property is for disposal, the son loses any right to a future claim over the property but acquires a moral responsibility to secure the financial stability of his parents (cf. Mark 7:9:13). The property sold would not be transferred to the new owner until the death of the younger son's father and, in the mean time, any profit derived from the exploitation of the property would go to the father himself.[54]

Nevertheless, besides the legitimacy or frequency of the situation portrayed in the parable, there are other relevant issues at stake. One already hinted at above has to do with the impact of the early disposal of family wealth by the younger son on the elder members of the family. Another one has to do with the honour of both the younger son and the family as a whole. On the one hand, the division of the inheritance and the departure of the younger son affect the overall relationships of family members.[55] With regard to the father, in v. 20 he is presented as eagerly waiting for the return of his son. In addition, it could be argued that the elder brother is not neutral in the whole process. From what can

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[53] See, Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 607; Derrett, Law (1970) 107.

[54] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1087. On inheritance during Second Temple Judaism see, Tob 8:21; Sir 33:20-24.

[55] See, Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 580.

be deduced from the text, in the new situation created in which the older son is the legal owner of the property, any financial decision of the father affecting the property would imply an inroad into the elder's son assets, a situation of potential conflict that the return of the younger son unleashes.[56] On the other hand, the ascribed honour of the young lad could be put in question by his early departure from the family, while the honour of the family is affected by the division and selling of the property.[57]

According to the narrative sequence, a few days later the younger son cashes his assets[58] and leaves for a far away country where he squanders his capital in dissolute living[59] (15:13). Therefore, he is presented as an inept steward of his share of the family welfare[60] and a reckless son who ignores the moral obligations towards his father attached to the money he has wastefully spent from the family inheritance.[61] Such a wasteful spending coincides with a severe famine (15:14) so that the son finds himself with no resources of his own. As a

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[56] According to Gowler, disputes between brothers are not unusual, much more when dealing with the division of an inheritance. Nor are discords between fathers and sons unusual. (Gowler, Pharisees [1991] 256). See, Gilmore, "Anthropology of the Mediterranean," (1982) 190; Derrett Law (1970) 116-21.

[57] See, Malina, NT World (1981) 78, 102.

[58] According to Marshall, "to turn into cash" and not "to gather together" is a better rendering of συνάγω (Luke NIGTC [1978] 607; cf. AG; Creed, St. Luke [1930] 199).

[59] ζῶν ἀσώτως, "living dissolutely", is hapax legomenon in the New Testament. See, Foerster, "ἀσώτως," TDNT 1.506-7.

[60] This is an element that would further the negative picture of the younger son among those listening to the parable for such an irresponsible attitude towards wealth would not be something that passed unnoticed in a "limited good" society.

[61] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 608.

result he is forced go to a gentile person who hires him to herd swine (15:15).[62] By taking a job that was considered unclean by Jews and as such a violation of purity rules the younger son brings shame to himself and to his father.[63] His status as the son of a landowner is lowered to the extent that he even considers the position of the hired men of his father as desirable (15:17). He is so hungry that he even wishes for the food of the pigs,[64] but he does not even get that. There is no one to help him.[65]

6.4 REPENTANCE (15:17-20a)

The situation already described above brings the younger son to reconsider his own situation, which the text designates as "coming to himself" (εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐλθών, 15:17).[66] Donahue rightly argues that even though it is out of his own need and fear of death that in a "self-serving" manner the younger son tries to

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[62] This person has to be a Gentile because of his possession of swine, something out of the question for a Jew. Cf. 8:32-37; Lev 11:7-8; Deut 14:8; 1 Mac 1:47; 2 Mac 6:18-20; 7:1-2.

[63] "None may rear swine anywhere" (*b. B. Qam*, 7:7). "Cursed is the man who rears swine or who teaches his son Greek philosophy" (*b. B. Qam*, 82b; cf. SB I, 492f, cf 448-50).

[64] Wishing for the pigs' food was probably one of the most degrading things for a Jew (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 608). Cf. 16:21.

[65] The situation is presented as extremely severe for the younger son. Green places him within the "rank of the expendables - made up especially of beggars and thieves, among whom mortality rates were very high (cf. 16:19-22)" (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 581). He seems to be outside the provision of the Jewish Diaspora system of almsgiving (cf. Mishnah, Peach 8:7; Danby The Mishnah 20; Schürer, History of the Jewish People 2:437; Posner, "Charity," EncJud 4:338-44), and the benefaction system in Greek and Greco-Roman world only favoured associations where wealthy people were patrons, and thus entitled to retribution of some sort (cf. Kim, Stewardship and Almsgiving [1998] 281-2; Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 581; Hammel, Poverty and Charity [1990] 219-20). There seem not to be any *friends* left from the "wealthy days" already past (cf. Sir 12:4-6). Therefore, the parable has the youngster turning to a Gentile and herding pigs. "He has lost his familial, ethnic, and religious identity" (Donahue, Gospel in Parable [1988] 153).

[66] Jeremias sees here an Aramaic expression of repentance, (Parables [1963] 130; cf. SB II, 214-5. Also Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 609; Scott, Jesus Symbol-Maker [1981] 51; Drake, "Reversal Theme," [1985] 219.

find a way out of his present situation, nonetheless his coming to himself is articulated in the confession that he has sinned against heaven and his father.[67]

A controversial point at this stage is whether the son really repents, whether he is sincere in his intentions or just motivated by his extreme need. Bailey sees in his physical need the motivation for his attitude, which he does not interpret as repentance at that stage, for, as in the story of the unjust steward in chapter 16, the younger son does not utter any word of excuse.[68] Likewise, Bornkamm argues that it is the awareness of his situation in the far country that makes him return to his father's house.[69] Derrett wonders about the sincerity of the attitude of the son and about the foolishness of the father in receiving him back in the same easy way that he gave him his share of the inheritance. It is at this point that Derrett finds "the fundamental weakness of the parable."[70]

The problems with these interpretations are various, not necessarily in the conclusions they make *per se*, but in the approach and assumptions. They are to some extent "psychologising" interpretations, trying to get at what is *really* behind the youngster's rationale and questioning the sincerity of the son and the good sense of the father. But even if the motivation for his presumed change of attitude is because of his circumstances, does it necessarily deny

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[67] Barton, "Parables on God's Love and Forgiveness," (2000) 210-1; Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 153. See Jeremias, Parables (1972) 130.

[68] Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 173-5.

[69] Bornkamm, Jesus (1960) 126-7.

[70] Derrett, "The Prodigal Son," (1970) 58.

sincerity? Marshall recalls a later Jewish dictum that illustrates the point, "when the Israelites are reduced to carob pods, then they repent".[71] Therefore, it seems a wrong approach to impose on the text an *a priori* understanding of what is to be considered a right motivation for repentance. Furthermore, by pushing the meaning of particular elements in the parable too far, those interpretations also ignore the context of repentance set by the two previous parables, in which the invitation to rejoice is over the repentance of a sinner (15:7, 10). The young son already produces a confession of his sin (15:18).

This is not to say that the declaration that he "came to himself" implies that the younger son repented, but that he "came to his senses", that he became aware of what was really going on (cf. Acts 12:11; T. Jos 3:9). However, as Green argues, "shades of repentance are clearly evident" when we read the statement in its *co-text* where there is specific emphasis on the repentance of sinners (vv. 1-2, 7,10), and, during his monologue (cf. 12:17, 45; 16:3-4; 18:4-5; 20:13), the younger son decides to go back home to admit his sin (vv. 18, 21).[72] Fitzmyer sees the value of the remorse of the young man as the first step towards repentance.[73] Donahue tries to query any emphasis on repentance by just looking at the first two parables of chapter 15, and argues that

> the parables [sheep and coin] do not simply provide a defence of Jesus' fellowship with outcasts; they speak more of the joy of finding and of being found. Applications of these parables, which stress the need for repentance are really in tension with the parabolic narrative. Neither the sheep nor the coin

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[71] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 609; cf. R. Acha, *c.* AD 320, in Lv.R.35 (132c); Str-B II, 213-5.

[72] Green, Luke (1997) 581.

[73] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1088.

> "repents". The one who is seeking provides all the dramatic action in the parable. The readers are summoned to rejoice with the one who finds and are invited to a joyous feast. Luke does not present simple paradigms of repentance but parables which open the possibility of conversion. Readers must hear the teaching of Jesus as the good news, not simply good advice, that he came 'to seek and save' the lost. The initiative has been taken by God through Jesus. 'Conversion' or change of heart (*metanoia*) is not a condition but a consequence of God's love.[74]

He is right in emphasising the invitation to joy resulting from the finding of the lost through God's initiative. The parables should be certainly read as good news for the lost. However, looking at the wider picture of Luke's theology, and although God's initiative through Jesus precedes any human intention, it expects a response, namely, repentance. This is not something implied in the first two parables but in the more elaborated parable of the lost son. The conflict that provokes Jesus' telling of these three parables results from the religious leaders' rejection of God's initiative displayed in Jesus' ministry (15:2). They object to Jesus' welcoming of and fellowship with sinners to whom he offers God's forgiveness and who show their acceptance of the divine initiative (*sc* repentance) by their gathering around Jesus (15:1). God's salvific grace is central to the story but repentance must certainly follow. Condition and consequence address both the divine and human scope of repentance.

In his confession (v. 18-19) the younger son assumes his own wrongdoing, that he has acted as a bad steward (cf. 16:1, 10-12), "I have sinned" (ἥμαρτον). His

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[74] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 151.

confession is of sin against heaven[75] and his father (εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιον σου), since by his dissipation of the inheritance, his disregard for family ties and responsibilities, and his trespassing of purity regulations he detaches himself from his father, people and also from God.[76] He acknowledges loss of status, and the shame brought to his father, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son." He thus asks his father to make[77] him like one of his day labourers.[78] In his confession "I am no longer worthy" (οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἄξιος), the son acknowledges he has lost his honour and it is in light of this confession that he goes to his father looking for his benefaction,[79] which in turn would restore him status, even if as a day labourer.

Derrett thinks that by working as a day labourer the younger son attempts both a reconciliation with the father and a repayment of all he lost. After all, the younger son's confession of sin is prompted by a loss of money that had a moral responsibility attached to it, which, so far, he has refused to acknowledge.[80] Bailey agrees with Derrett that being a hired worker he would

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[75] "'Heaven' is a surrogate for 'God', (cf. Dan 4:26; 1Mac 3:18. Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 582; Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1985] 1089) and the confession is a paraphrase of Exodus 10:16.

[76] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 154.

[77] Braun studies the word used here, ποιέω, and says that it is the creative activity of God that is meant in the Old Testament, while in the New Testament it refers to God's "helping and redeeming activity (Braun, "ποιέω," TDNT 6.464).

[78] This kind of workers did not have work or income secured, so that they were in a worse position to that of a slave (cf. 10:2; 15:17; 16:3. Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 581 n.236.). They belonged, according to Moxnes, to the mostly unequal partners' relationships in the village community, which would include "lender and debtor", "lord and debtor" (7:41; cf. 6:34; 16:15); father (i.e., 'landowner') and day labourer (Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom [1988] 62-3). Fitzmyer rightly points out that "the parable does not idealize the sinner" (Fitzmyer, Luke AB 1985] 1089).

[79] Malina, NT World (1981) 78.

[80] Derrett, "The Prodigal Son," (1970) 65.

try to "fulfil his moral responsibility to the father. In losing the money he failed in these responsibilities. Now he will make up for what he has lost... He wants no grace".[81] He has sinned because he has misused and lost the money, and now, by returning to his father and acknowledging his sin, he is willing to accept the so far neglected obligations.[82] Thus, at first, it is because of his selfish ambition, that he asks for his legal share of the property and gets it, that he dismisses all family and community ties, and all moral obligations tied to the money. However, it is when he loses the money that he is able to come to his senses and reconsider his position and attitude towards all he left behind. This dialectic relationship between wealth and the moral implications attached to its use (or misuse) is a major theological emphasis of Luke. Attachment to wealth interferes in the process of right decision-making and actions. Likewise, right decisions and action are detached from the selfish criteria of wealth. Luke grants moral status to the use of wealth. As Holgate points out, few scholars have given enough credit to the theme of possessions at work in this parable.[83] His aim is to establish the relationship between the moral teaching of Greco-Roman philosophers and Luke.[84] His interest is in the moral-philosophical dimension of the parable of the lost son, especially under what he claims to be

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[81] Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 177.

[82] There is no mention in the text that clearly indicates that the younger son accepts now the previously disregarded obligations towards his father. Nonetheless, it would a total misunderstanding of an important point in the story to neglect the change of attitude in the youngster that prompts his return to his father. Repentance would not be real without this implied change of attitude.

[83] He mentions scholars who, having dealt with the issue of possessions in Luke, fail to treat 15:11-32 as relevant (i.e. Horn, Glaube und Handeln [1986^2] 58-87, 107-15, 154; Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 247-51; Pilgrim, Good News to the Poor [1981] 109-19, 125-9, 138-9, 141-3, 184 n.3; Mealand, Poverty and Expectation [1980] 27-33; Karris, "Poor and Rich," [1978] 112-25; Marshall, Historian and Theologian [1970] 143. Cf. Holgate, Prodigal Son [1999] 69-70).

[84] Holgate, Prodigal Son (1999) 37.

the point of contact with moral philosophers, namely, the topos "On Covetousness".[85] He considers "that the parable teaches the virtue of compassionate liberality and rejects the opposing vices of prodigality and meanness".[86] Among his conclusions there are the particularly Lukan emphases on the need for those who have wealth to share it with the poor and on compassion.[87] The approach is quite beyond the scope of the present work and its author's attempt to move the emphasis of the parable from the theological "lost-found" motif, resulting from only taking Luke 15 as the context of the parable, questionable.[88] However, Holgate certainly stands as a corrective to those readings that overlook the role of wealth and its consequences in the construction of this parable, especially attending to the relevance Luke gives to the theme through his work.

This detachment from the use of wealth is present in other Lukan conversion stories, as for example in the conversion of Levi who leaves everything to follow Jesus (5:28) or that of Zacchaeus who gives half of his possessions to the poor after his encounter with him (19:8). Also, in the account of the conversion of the woman of the city (7:36-50), the redactional hand of Luke has moved the story of the women who serve Jesus out of their means (8:1-3)

[85] By "topos" he means "traditional treatments of moral subjects in which authors use recurrent themes, motifs, terminology and illustrations as a rhetorical frame of reference for making their own views known" (Holgate, Prodigal Son [1999] 91).

[86] Holgate, Prodigal Son (1999) 68.

[87] Holgate, Prodigal Son (1999) 248-9.

[88] His interpretation springs from a reading of Luke 15:11-32 from the perspective of other *L* parables, an analysis to which he devotes chapter 3 of his book (Holgate, Prodigal Son [1999] 69-89).

from its passion narrative context (Mark 15:40-41; par. Matt 27:55-56) to follow it so that the emphasis on the right use of possessions as the result of the encounter with Jesus is established.

The use of soliloquy – for rhetorical effect – shows the younger son's awareness of his sin, but it is not until he makes his way towards the house of his father that reconciliation becomes a real possibility.[89] Green sees the expression "I will arise" (ἀναστὰς, 5:18) as a metaphor that marks not only his return from the far country to his own one, but from death in life, which links with two other similar summary expressions of the father to depict the situation of his younger son.[90]

6.5 ACCEPTANCE AND FORGIVENESS (15:20b-24)

The beginning of the son's return back to his father (cf. Is 63:15-16; Jer 3:22; 31:18-20; Ho 11:1-9)[91] implies his intention to find forgiveness and acceptance, even if as a day labourer. This is something hinted at in his words of repentance that convey the decision to face both the shame of his previous actions and his neglected responsibilities. Although the return of the younger son implies that he expects a certain degree of acceptance from his father, the

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[89] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 582.

[90] Cf. 15:24, 32. Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 582 n.238. It is worth noticing that ἀναστὰς is the same expression found in the story of Levi when responding to Jesus' call to follow him (5:28).

[91] See, Quell, "πατήρ," TDNT 5.973.

question of the father's reaction is still open, though it is a question that the text soon resolves. It is when the son is still distant (v. 20) that the father sees him and is overwhelmed with compassion.[92] To make this emotion graphic and active in the narration, the father is shockingly presented "running" (δραμών, 15:20) to meet his son, something unexpected of the *paterfamilias* in oriental culture.[93] Furthermore, it could be interpreted that the father shames himself by receiving back the son who brought dishonour to him.

At this stage in the parable, the leading action moves from the younger son to the father (v. 20b). No matter how relevant the issue of honour and shame may be to the parable, especially given the public dimension of the situation,[94] Green rightly points out that the main emphasis is not on the response of "the public" but that of the father, which is one of compassion (cf. 10:25-37; 7:11-17). It is out of compassion that the father receives his son and restores him. The emphasis on the shift of focus "from public opinion with respect to the identity of 'sinners' and 'the righteous', towards adopting God's own point-of-view is very important (cf. 18:9-14; 19:1-10)".[95]

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[92] The three uses of σπλαγχνίζομαι, "to be filled with compassion", are unique to Luke (cf. 7:13; 10:33). Also, there is no indication in the story that the father had rejected his son. On the relation between the father and compassion in Luke see, 6:36; 8:51; 9:42; 11:2, 11, 13; 12:30, 32.

[93] See, Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 155; Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 181; Jeremias, Parables (1972) 130.

[94] Such a public dimension becomes evident firstly in the father's running to meet his son and secondly in the celebration that followed, with the killing of the fatted calf. Such a celebration probably included more people than those of the household, both because of the large amount of meat (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 583 n.244; Jeremias, Parables [1963] 130) and also because it accords with the reactions portrayed in the previous two parables after finding what was lost, i.e. the calling of friends and neighbours together and inviting them to rejoice (vv. 6, 9).

[95] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 583 n.244.

It is the father's initiative that interrupts the son's words of repentance, thus gaining the control in the course of action. This situation would accord with the emphasis in the two previous parables in chapter 15, namely the seeking and searching for what was lost.[96] The son does not have a chance to completely utter his rehearsed apology.[97] That the younger son does not finish his words is not due to a sudden change of mind but to the gracious attitude of the father. He has been restored "to status in the family".[98] The father shows his acceptance (v. 20) and restoration (vv. 22-24) by embracing and kissing him.[99]

The actions of the father continue, this time by ordering his servants to bring a robe, a ring and sandals for the son. They have to do it quickly, which resonates Luke's emphasis on "today" linked with the bestowing of salvation by Jesus.[100] Thus, it is now by the word and authority of the father who has sought, forgiven and received the son that restoration (*sc.* salvation) has come to the youngster, and so the identity markers of such a restitution are required by the father at that very moment. To put it in Luke's own terms, it is today that salvation has come to the youngster (cf. 19:9).

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[96] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 610.

[97] Both codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus include the words "treat me as one of your hired servants" at the end of v. 21, which in light of P^{75}, an early manuscript of Luke which does not include them, seems more a harmonisation.

[98] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 582; Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 155-6.

[99] Marshall shows that the phrase relating the actions of the father is a Lukan one (cf. Acts 20:37. See Gen. 33:4; 45:14-15). He also points out that the actions become a symbol of the father's forgiveness and of restoration of the broken relationship (cf. 2 Sam 14:33). The initiative is that of the father (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 610; cf. Rengstorf, Luk. 15, 11-32 [1967] 19).

[100] Similar, for example, is the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus (19:1-10) where it is in the actual meeting with Jesus and because of Jesus' presence and authoritative word that Zacchaeus acquires salvation. It is not until the son goes to his father, and more importantly, it is not until the father accepts

With regard to the things required for the younger son, there are first the clothes, which convey social meaning and status. "To be naked marked exclusion from the village community; it implied a transition from human life to demonic existence [cf. 8:26-39, esp. v.27]. Likewise, putting on clothes marked the transition back into human society".[101] It is a way to vindicate the son's (re)new(ed) status.[102] The ring is a symbol of authority,[103] which signals his restored status in the household, and the shoes mark his status not as a slave but as a freeman. It is only the master who wears shoes in the house, not the guests.[104] Therefore, the father is bestowing the younger son with possessions, authority and freedom. Such symbols would have been clearly understood at the time as a way to restore the son back into social life,[105] and certainly to exemplify the words of the father about the son being dead and now alive again, lost but now found (v. 24).[106] It is time for a joyful celebration.[107]

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and forgives, and therefore receives his son that restoration/salvation is possible (cf. 2:11; 4:21; 13:32-33; 19:5, 9; 23:43). Eschatological salvation is available today through and in Jesus.

[101] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 91.

[102] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 610; cf. Jeremias, Parables (1972) 130.

[103] It is a signet ring (Donahue, Gospel in Parable [1988] 155. Cf. Gen 41:41-42; Is 22:21).

[104] See, Derrett, Law (1970) 113-5; Jeremias, Parables (1963) 130.

[105] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 92.

[106] The language of "dead" and "lost" reflects the rejection of the family by the younger son, even that he was morally dead, which puts into perspective the joyful celebration after his return. The reference to "life" and "being found" reflects the restoration to the family and his moral restoration. The language of "lost and found" links the present parable with the two previous ones.

[107] The expression used εὐφρανθῶμεν (cf. 12:19; 16:19) implies celebrating at other people's expense. However the celebration suggested in this third parable in chapter 15 (cf. vv. 23, 24, 29, 32) is positively used to mark the event of the finding of the lost. People from the villages had a very simple diet, mostly bread and fish (Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom [1988] 86) so that meat was not eaten often, which signals the special nature of the event (Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1985] 1090).

6.6 OPPOSITION (15:25-30)

Up until this moment in the parable, the older son has played no role in the events narrated, except for his mention as one of the two sons of a man (v. 11). It is now in verse 24 that he is mentioned as returning from the field and hearing the music and dancing (v. 25). He does not enter his house but calls a servant to tell him about what is going on in there (v. 26). The intended portrait of the older son is that of an outsider, as the one not participating in the celebration but questioning its validity.[108] This is a Lukan constant in the conversion stories. Those who accept Jesus' ministry are found sharing fellowship around the table while it is mainly Pharisees who criticise such an association between Jesus and those they deem as sinners. Thus, Levi follows Jesus and gives a great banquet in his honour (5:29) while the Pharisees and their scribes show their disapproval by criticising Jesus' fellowship with "sinners" (5:30). The woman of the city is introduced as an outsider, while the Pharisee is the host, but after the encounter with Jesus, the actions of the woman are ideally presented as being like those of a host (7:44-46), while Simon and other guests distance themselves from the situation by criticising Jesus, the prophet who is not able to discern what kind of woman she is (7:39, 49). When Jesus sees Zacchaeus, he presents him with the urgency of visiting his home (19:5) to which salvation has come (19:9), while the crowd murmur against Jesus' fellowship with a sinner (19:7). Here in the parable, the

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[108] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 151; Scott, Jesus Symbol-Maker (1981) 53.

dispassionate report by the servant becomes a retelling of the actions (v. 27), which serves the purpose of marking the differences between the two brothers, the younger one being a shameful and reckless person, the older one an honourable and accountable one.[109]

It is again the father, as in the part dealing with the return of the younger brother, who is depicted providing the shocking element of the story, for he leaves the party when he hears that his older son is outside the house refusing to join in the celebration,[110] and thus neglecting his obligations.[111] Such a rebellious attitude of the older son humiliates his father publicly and his father shames himself by leaving the party to plead with his son (v. 28).[112] The older son does not come to terms with his father and talks to him disrespectfully.

In arguing that he has served his father like a slave, the elder son uses legal language, δουλεύω - οὐδέποτε ἐντολήν σου παρῆλθον (v. 29), to introduce his position.[113] Not only that, but he also refuses the use of any kind of familiar language and so he does not address him as father (vv. 12, 18, 21) and his brother is "that son of yours" (v. 30).[114] The contrast is sharp between the

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[109] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 584.

[110] The Law anticipated the disciplinary measures to be taken against such a rebellious attitude of a son (cf. Deut 21:18-21. See also, Prov 10:1; 17:21-25; 19:18, 26, 20:20; 22:15; 23:22-25; 28:34).

[111] The elder son was supposed to attend the guests and make sure that everything was right. See, Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 584 n. 249; Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 194.

[112] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 255; Bailey, Poet and Peasant (1976) 195.

[113] There are some similarities in the attitude of the elder son and that of the Pharisee in chapter 16 or the rich ruler in chapter 18, for even though they both observe the law, their attachment to wealth portrays them as missing the main emphasis of the story.

[114] On address forms as indicators of relationship, see Fasold, Sociolinguistics (1990) 1-38.

affectionate attitude of the father and the angry response of the elder son. The latter also shows his rejection of family bonds when he refuses to celebrate his brother's return while he resents not having been able to celebrate with his friends.[115] Luke also shows elsewhere that it is at table that kinship affinity is manifested. In Luke's theological presentation, it is through table-fellowship that acceptance and inclusion into the kingdom is displayed.[116]

The main argument of the older son against the attitude of his father is on the basis of his acceptance of the one who has squandered his share of the property in dissolute living.[117] The allegation is thus based on the preoccupation about material possessions which seems to be of more importance for the older son than his own brother, who after acknowledging and repenting of his sin has returned home.[118] Although the father has the right to dispose of the surplus of the property, what he does not spend now adds to what the older son will get in the future. It can be presumed that the older son sees in the situation a second expropriation from what is now legally his by his brother and with the consent of his father. Here the contrast between the attitudes of the two brothers is pertinent. On the one hand, it is the younger brother's renunciation of any financial help that allows reconciliation. On the other hand, it is the older

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[115] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 585.

[116] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 585 n.250. Thus, table-fellowship is a component in most conversion stories in Luke to signal the reality of the new eschatological community (cf. 5:27-32; 7:36-50; 19:1.10).

[117] The accusation is right although there is no ground for the imputation of having spent the money with prostitutes.

[118] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 256.

brother's clinging to "self-righteousness" that disrupts the relationship and prevents him from rejoicing, at least at first, over the return of his brother.

The section of the parable in which the elder son plays a part has no counterpart in the previous two parables, but links with the introductory verses of the chapter where Pharisees and scribes criticise Jesus for his fellowship with toll collectors and sinners. It is in the portrait of the older brother that Jesus parallels the position of both Pharisees and scribes.[119] Schottroff denies the picture is an accurate characterisation of the Pharisees: rather it is what the early church thought of them.[120] Marshall affirms that whether the characterisation is accurate or not is beyond the point in question. The description, nonetheless, coincides with what Jesus says elsewhere about the Pharisees.[121] It is a "persuasive definition" more than a statement to identify with. It is intended to make the Pharisees "re-examine themselves".[122] As will be shown in the next section, Luke leaves the parable open-ended to allow for a positive response from both Pharisees and scribes. However, the celebration has begun.

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[119] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 253.

[120] Schottroff, "Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn," (1971) 50-51.

[121] It is a consistent picture in Luke to have Pharisees and scribes opposing Jesus' fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, as already shown above.

[122] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 612.

6.7 PRONOUNCEMENT (15:31-32)

Jesus concludes the parable with the words of the father, addressing the older brother as "son"[123] thus acknowledging the family bonds which the elder son resists. The father wants to have a relationship with both sons[124] but it is the older one who rejects this. His status is at stake not because of the father but because of his own attitude. The father tries to avoid this by calling him "son" and by acknowledging his position and authority, "you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours" (v. 31).[125]

In addition, by referring to "this brother of yours" the father is trying to prompt reconciliation.[126] There are no recriminations against the elder brother for being wrong but nevertheless, the father does not make excuses for the celebration. On the contrary, he makes it a true necessity[127] with which the older son is invited to concur and therefore to join in, since his brother was dead but now has come to life, lost but has been found.

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[123] Although in the context of the parable τέκνον is taken as an affective address of the father towards the older son (Jeremias, Parables [1972] 131) York mentions that in 2:48 and 16:25 it is used in a context of rebuke (York, Last Shall Be First [1991] 152). This is something not to be completely discarded here, for its use could really aim at provoking a reaction from the Pharisees and the scribes, besides signalling the gravity of the consequences implied in not concurring with the main thrust of the story.

[124] There is an important contrast between the way both brothers define "sonship" and how the father defines family relationships. The former do it in terms of "servile obligations" while the latter does it in ways that "leads to life and joy" (Donahue, Gospel in Parable [1988] 157).

[125] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 157.

[126] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 586.

[127] Such a language of necessity, δεῖ, is a Lukan way to express God's preordained redemptive plan and initiative at work through and in the ministry of Jesus (2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7, 44). See, Squires, Plan (1983), esp. 155-85.

The reversals in the story reach here a conclusive stage. First it was the younger son who having lost everything, hoped to be at least a day labourer but he was fully returned to his previous honour and position. Now it is the turn of the older brother. He is portrayed as an insider, the one that remains loyal to the father and the household but who now refuses to enter the house and fulfil his obligation as the older son at the party. The remaining question is whether the older brother will accept the arguments of the father and join in the celebration or not. This is a question Luke leaves open. It is intended that the audience should consider their own position.[128]

The Pharisees and the scribes are the ones to face the challenge of the question. With this parable, Jesus has justified his ministry by referring to God's compassion towards the lost, and on the basis of their criticisms has forced the identification between the Pharisees and the scribes with the older brother. They are now to consider whether they will join in the celebration or not.

The ironic reference in 15:7 to the "righteous" who do not need to repent,[129] as opposed to the lost one who repents and causes joy in heaven, links with the self-identification of the older son as a righteous person (cf. 18:9) in contrast with his sinful brother. Such a connection implies a criticism of the attitude of Pharisees and scribes as the self-righteous ones who therefore reject God's

[128] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 604.

[129] Certainly echoing 5:32 (also ironic).

redemptive purpose. The challenge to them is to acknowledge such gracious activity of God, manifested in Jesus' ministry to the sinners and outcasts.[130] Gowler thinks that the challenge is hopeless, so Pharisees and scribes will go on opposing God's plan,[131] something that could be assumed according to the way Pharisees are portrayed in the remaining episodes in Luke.[132]

It has already been argued above that the Pharisees are not criticised on the basis of any unrighteous behaviour but because of their failure to fulfil their task as shepherds of the flock. However, the implications and consequences of the indictment go far beyond a mere matter of compelling them to do "a proper job". If Pharisees and scribes oppose Jesus, whom Luke presents conveying God's salvific plan and initiative and, if it is actually by meeting with, being accepted by and sharing communal fellowship with Jesus that eschatological salvation is granted, their opposition to Jesus has soteriological consequences for the Pharisees.[133] They must not continue rejecting God's purpose for them

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[130] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 586.

[131] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 252.

[132] Cf. 16:14 ("money lovers"); 17:20; 18:9-14 ("self-righteous"); 19:39 ("Teacher, rebuke your disciples").

[133] That is why the words of Neale on Luke 15 that "one would not guess, on the basis of these parables, that the Pharisees are represented elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke as the enemies of God" (None but the Sinner [1991] 163) or the suggestion that Luke 15 softens the Lukan negative view on Pharisees (None but the Sinner [1991] 162, 4) could not be more inaccurate.

(cf. 7:30) but consider repentance themselves,[134] in line with Luke's emphasis on the universal need for repentance.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This further encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes raises conflict because of the latter's misunderstanding and rejection of Jesus' ministry to the outcast. Pharisees and scribes are introduced criticising and murmuring against Jesus' fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, to which he responds with three parables, the third one on the joy of finding the lost (15:11-32) being the basis for the present chapter. Luke shows Jesus attempting not a justification of his own ministry but a presentation of God's salvation in which his ministry finds legitimisation. Jesus' attitude to sinners corresponds to that of God himself. To this, Green adds that by appealing to God's will, Jesus is not just defending himself but making a declaration of intention.[135] God's graceful initiative and mercy for the lost are at work in Jesus' call for repentance and conversion, a main Lukan emphasis.[136] That is the cause for a joyful celebration.[137]

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[134] Cf. 13:1-9, in which the universality of sin is affirmed and that only through repentance salvation can be attained. It is in the parable of the fig tree (vv. 6-9) that the emphasis on fruits that evidence of such repentance becomes relevant.

[135] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 586.

[136] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1071.

[137] Donahue, Gospel in Parable (1988) 259; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 605. Goulder affirms that the joy over the repentance of sinners is not "descriptive of the actions of God, but imperatives, urging a proper line of conduct on the Christian" (Goulder, Luke [1989] 614).

The parable has introduced attachment to wealth as a key element to depict the different positions of the two brothers at the different stages of the same. When wealth plays a prime role, relationships are disrupted, so that on the one hand, the younger son decides to leave the house to live recklessly and, on the other hand, the older one cannot receive his repentant brother. It is when wealth has no influence that the younger son comes to his senses, acknowledges his sin and goes back to his father.

In his initiative towards sinners, Jesus transcends generally accepted socio-religious boundaries. This creates a new group for which repentance becomes both the expected consequence of the divine initiative and also the required response of the individual.[138] In addition, God grants honour and status to those who repent and therefore become part of the eschatological community. Furthermore, in line with his exhortation to the Pharisee to invite those who cannot repay him (cf. 14:13-14), Jesus challenges patron-client relationships in his emphasis on offering sinners unmerited grace.[139] The story conveys the view that it is in receiving sinners that honour is found. This is a major element that Luke emphasises in his theology of conversion, namely, God's graceful and unmerited initiative.

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[138] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 572.

[139] Gowler, Pharisees (1991) 256.

The ministry of Jesus has been shown as fulfilling God's plan to grant eschatological salvation "today" to those sinners to whom Jesus brings forgiveness, a process that reverses social values and assumptions. As it was in the encounter with the father that the son finds restoration, so Luke emphasises that it is in encountering Jesus that God's forgiveness takes place. This affirmation enhances an important christological emphasis in the identification of Jesus' ministry with God's salvific initiative.[140] The corresponding response expected from the sinner is repentance, although the emphasis should lie on the unconditional love of God who seeks and finds the lost.[141]

Therefore, concerning the search for elements in Luke's pattern of conversion, chapter 15 introduces one more occasion in which Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes clash (15:2) because of Jesus' acceptance of those toll collectors and sinners who come to him (15:1). It is a matter of dispute how much Luke intends to say, if anything, about wealth and possessions in the parable of the lost son although it is difficult not to make connections with Luke's theology in a parable in which "alienation, conversion and return are all expressed by possessions".[142] However, the main emphasis of the parable is on divine initiative and forgiveness, which has been displayed in the role of the father (15:20). Luke's emphasis on repentance as the expected answer to such a graceful offer is present in the younger son's decision to return to his father and

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[140] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 604.

[141] Manson, Sayings (1949) 284.

[142] Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 161.

confess his sin (15:18-21). That the lost has been found is an occasion for a joyful celebration around the table (15:22-24). The reversal of the story is graphically illustrated in the "dead/alive", "lost/found" metaphors (15:24, 32), and also in the elder son's staying outside the house and the celebration (15:28). The concluding statement on the necessity to celebrate connects with the emphasis of the two previous parables on the joy of finding the lost (15:32) and also establishes the ministry of Jesus within the perspective of God's own plan of salvation.

7. THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHAEUS (Luke 19:1-10)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional understanding of the story of Zacchaeus as the description of a conversion or a salvation event has been greatly disputed for the last hundred years, although with especial vigour in the last two decades. Most of that dissent comes from the form critical analysis of the text which has, however, reached different conclusions. For instance, Bultmann categorises the text as a biographical apophthegm representing both an ideal and metaphorical situation.[1] Dibelius sees Luke 19:1-10 as a personal legend although with a historical core,[2] on which Marshall agrees.[3] White questions the approach to Luke 19:1-10 as a salvation story since, through the study of the text, he finds none of the elements required for it, and thus suggests that a different understanding of the text is required, namely, that of a vindication of Zacchaeus.[4] Thus, Jesus is declaring not Zacchaeus' forgiveness but his innocence before an accusing crowd. Tannehill has argued for a pronouncement story, particularly of the quest type, as a proper

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[1] Bultmann, History (1963) 55-7.

[2] Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (1970) 50-1.

[3] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 695.

[4] White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" (1979-80) 21. The elements White interprets as part of any salvation story are: "(1) clear indication that the subject is a sinner (e.g., 7^{37}) and mention of that sin by Jesus (5^{20}, 7^{47}); (2) speech and behaviour of the subject which is self-effacing and contrite 8^{40}, 15^{21}, 18^{13}); deference to the power of Jesus and petition for his mercy (9^{37}, 17^{13}); (4) a forgiveness pronouncement by Jesus, noting 'faith' (5^{20}, 7^{47}); (5) observer reaction to the power of Jesus to effect change, either marvelling (5^{26}) or complaining at Jesus' arrogance (7^{49})". However, White's construction becomes questionable using the same texts he cites to validate his argument. There is no single story of those he mentions that includes all the elements that would make them salvation stories which brings into question the pattern of salvation he has established.

reading of 19:1-10.[5] Similarly for Fitzmyer, it is a pronouncement story concluding in v.9, σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο.[6]

The story, which Luke has received from *L*, may not run smoothly in all places, as, for example, the apparent disconnection between vv. 7 and 8, or Jesus' treatment of Zacchaeus in the third person in v.9, seems to indicate. Bultmann thinks Luke 19:1-10 is "not a unitary composition" so that v.1 is an editorial introduction and vv. 8 and 10 are additions to the original account on the basis of the use of the third person in v.9 (καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν).[7] The position of Nolland with regard to v.1 as a redactional addition is similar. He also considers the possibility that vv. 2-6 were the original foundation of the story to which vv. 7, 9-10 might have been "added in a single stage of development", and v.8 added by Luke as a second stage in the process.[8] The insertion of vv. 9-10 gives the passage the form of a pronouncement story.[9] From Evans' point of view, v.7 seems an "intrusion", but if it is removed the interpretation of v.9 becomes more difficult, since the reference to the crowd as a possible recipient of the words of Jesus would disappear.[10]

[5] Tannehill, "Varieties," (1981) 113. See his "Pronouncement," (1981) 1-13 as a general study on the issue.

[6] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1219.

[7] Bultmann, History (1963) 33.

[8] Nolland, Luke WBC (1993) 904.

[9] Nolland, Luke WBC (1993) 904.

[10] Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 661.

The main problem is the tension between material coming from tradition and the Lukan material itself. Luke has taken the story of Zacchaeus from his special source *L* but "the material has been so thoroughly edited by Luke and his source that it is hard to offer a certain analysis."[11] Therefore, since the redactional work of Luke is so important here, consideration will be given to the current and final stage of the story as the working basis of the present chapter, providing a sufficient foundation for what Luke wanted to convey to his readers.

Concerning the context of the story of Zacchaeus, Luke introduces the story of Zacchaeus at the final stages of the travel narrative (9:51-19:27), within those stories that function as a response to the question posed by the coming of the Son of Man: "will he find faith on the earth?" (ἆρα εὑρήσει τὴν πίστιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς; 18:8). There is the parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector (18:9-14) which displays what has been a constant in Luke's theological representation of the twofold response to God's salvific plan. Thus, those who belong to leading socio-religious groups are characterised as responding with contempt, trusting in their (self-)righteousness, while those socially despised are depicted responding positively to God. The two following accounts refer to the children being brought to Jesus to be blessed by him (18:15-17) and the story of the rich ruler who inquires about how to inherit eternal life (18:18-27). They emphasise that it is by humility and not by trusting in wealth that eternal life is attained. Jesus' disciples exemplify that reality for they have left everything to follow Jesus (18:38-30).

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[11] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 695. On the Lukan redactional emphasis here, see, O'Hanlon ("Story of Zacchaeus," [1981] 2-26) and Loewe ("Interpretation of Lk 19:1-10," [1974] 321-31).

The final episode of the travel narrative (19:11-27) follows the Zacchaeus account and confirms a main issue there and also in Luke's theology, namely, the interrelation between people's response to God and their attitude towards possessions. Other connections between the Zacchaeus pericope and its co-texts, especially redactional elements, will be reflected whenever pertinent in the following analysis.

The procedure will be the following. First of all, attention will be paid to those authors who argue for a vindication or defence of Zacchaeus as the proper reading of the story. After that, the analysis of Luke 19:1-10 as a conversion story will be presented and conclusions will be arranged in order to respond to the vindication view but also to provide the possible elements of the paradigm of conversion in Luke.

7.2 A CASE FOR ZACCHAEUS' VINDICATION?

7.2.1 Introduction

Recent scholarship on Luke 19:1-10 highlights a variety of elements relevant to its interpretation, although the conclusions reached are far from unanimous. Nevertheless the main interpretative division flows from the study of the verbs δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι in v.8, which becomes the argumentative cornerstone of those who propound the reading of Luke 19:1-10 as a vindication story, as a

defence of Zacchaeus' customary upright conduct.[12] Even when some of the proponents of this alternative look into the wider context, they do so restrictively. Therefore, the position argued in this chapter is that the story of Zacchaeus, supported both by its context and by Lukan emphasis, is a story of salvation.

7.2.2 A Vindication Theory

The main arguments stated by those scholars who hold the vindication of Zacchaeus as the best reading of Luke 19:1-10, can be sketched in the following points: (1) The main point of contention is about the proper way to translate δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι which supporters of the vindication theory argue should be translated in its present continuous tense, implying actions already taking place. (2) The terms otherwise frequently used by Luke in so-called salvation stories, which include sin, repentance, forgiveness, and faith, are conspicuously absent in the story of Zacchaeus. (3) Zacchaeus is morally virtuous by means of his Jewishness. That is what Jesus declares when saying that Zacchaeus is a son of Abraham, not a sinner. (4) On the basis of Zacchaeus' innocence, there is the need for a defence because of the wrongly accusing crowd. (5) The vindicating words of Jesus provide Zacchaeus' needed defence of his innocence. (6) Finally, there is the practical interpretation of the text as helping the Christian community with faithful members who had despised occupations, which is articulated from the story of a chief toll collector whose moral conduct Jesus defends.

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[12] Cf. White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" (1979-80) 21; Mitchell, "συκοφαντεῖν," (1991) 546-7; idem. "Zacchaeus Revisited," (1990) 53-76; Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 19-32; and in commentary sections on Luke 19:1-10, such as, Green, Luke NICNT (1997); Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985); Godet, Luke CFTL (1875).

"There are compelling reasons to interpret these verbs as iterative, marking his customary actions."[13] In this way Mitchell starts his argument for this reading of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι as key elements indicating that Luke 19:1-10 is a defence of Zacchaeus. He responds to four main objections to the vindication hypothesis, namely: (1) The defensive statement of Zacchaeus would turn into boasting. (2) "Salvation" in v.9 and "lost" in v.10 should be seen in their larger Lukan context, which shows the links with "repentance". (3) The larger Lukan perspective would make v.8 look like a post-conversion decision to be read as parallel to 5:27-32 and 15:1-32. (4) The role of Jesus in the defence story would be "superfluous".[14] To this, Mitchell answers that (1) In view of the murmuring of the crowd, his words are not boasting but a defence. (2) "Salvation" is not used in Luke only as forgiveness of sins, but in connection with the Davidic Messiah (1:69), or deliverance from enemies (1:71), with no sin and repentance implied. The seeking and salvation of the "lost" is linked to the right of Zacchaeus to salvation as any other Israelite, since, after all, he is also a son of Abraham. (3) Although there are similarities with 5:27-32 and 15:1-32, they cannot be read together since 19:1-10 "is not about repentance but is rather about Zacchaeus' salvation seen as the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham".[15] (4) The words of Jesus give Zacchaeus the final vindication that he cannot obtain by his own defence.[16]

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[13] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 154.

[14] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 155-6.

[15] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 162.

[16] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 157-62. To see the counteraction to Mitchell's response to Hamm's first article on the story of Zacchaeus see Hamm, "Once More?" (1991) 248-52.

Against the customary translation of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι as "futuristic present" or "present resolve" scholars supporting the vindication theory argue that these tenses stand for a confession of what already is a customary action. Thus, what Zacchaeus is telling Jesus is that he is already giving half of his goods to the poor and paying fourfold to those whom he might have defrauded. Godet who thought that the text was an apology for Zacchaeus, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century challenged the traditional interpretation of these tenses as a customary happening.[17]

It is from a form-critical perspective that White denies that Luke 19:1-10 is a salvation story, since it "reveals none of the expected characteristics of such a story".[18] He argues that the traditional translation "I will give" and "since I have defrauded", which he dates back to the third century, is a forced one instead of its more natural translation "I give half" and "If I have defrauded". As a vindication story, "the language will function as it stands".[19]

Concerning the absence of salvation language, Ravens argues that it is very difficult to substantiate the argument that Zacchaeus is repenting since "there is no announcement of forgiveness and there is no call to repent or for Zacchaeus to

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[17] Godet, Luke CFTL (1875) 217-8.

[18] White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" (1979-80) 21.

[19] White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" (1979-80) 21. Furthermore, Green links the interpretation of "I give... I pay back" "with the progression of the narrative to this point (...) to take these verbs as present progressives" on the basis of the lack of reference to repentance or faith. He acknowledges the traditional interpretation of v.8 as referring to a "present resolve", which would direct Zacchaeus' words to Jesus and not to the accusing crowd (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 671-2).

give up his occupation."[20] It is only when v.8 "is understood as expressing new intentions" that Zacchaeus' repentance can be presumed and, therefore, the futuristic interpretation of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι could be envisaged, although it is very difficult to substantiate.[21] Salvation by means of vindication is Raven's position, identifying elements in the story which would support a salvation motif interpretation, but he is not fully convinced about this possibility. He speaks of an intentional ambiguity in v.8 which would "leave open the possibility that the coming of Jesus led to a change of heart."[22] This he immediately dismisses on the basis of the absence of support for Zacchaeus' being a sinner and the lack of reference to repentance and forgiveness.[23]

The vindication of Zacchaeus is the Lukan aim in this passage, these scholars would allege, so that their position argues for the rehabilitation of the reputation of being a good Jew, a Son of Abraham. There is also the rhetorical question posed at the end of White's article, "did Jesus forgive a penitent sinner, or did he vindicate a 'pure' publican's good name against a false, stereotyped charge?",[24] the answer to which White thinks is obvious, namely, that in v.8 Zacchaeus is defending himself from the accusation of the crowd rather than pleading for forgiveness. This, in turn, receives the vindicating, not forgiving, words of Jesus in 19:9.

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[20] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 23.

[21] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 23-4.

[22] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 27-8.

[23] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 28.

[24] White, "Vindication for Zacchaeus?" (1979-80) 21.

Fitzmyer questions whether it is particularly clear that Zacchaeus is a sinner, even though the unanimous attitude of the crowd leads the reader to think that way. Besides this, the words of Jesus do not intend forgiveness but the vindication of Zacchaeus whom he sees, regardless of his job, as an innocent son of Abraham.[25] This interpretation is enlightened by the similarities Fitzmyer finds between Jesus' ministry as the Son of Man, seeking and saving the lost, and Yahweh's attitude towards Israel as presented in Ezek 34:16.[26] In this same line of argument, Mitchell in his 1990 article seeks to show that "in the Zacchaeus story, Luke wanted to show how salvation came to a loyal Jew, a son of Abraham, without necessarily implying that Jesus saw him as a sinner."[27] Therefore "Jesus offers Zacchaeus salvation because he is a believing Jew and not because he had had a sudden change of heart."[28] He goes a step further in the vindication interpretation of Luke in seeing Jesus vindicated also from the accusation of wrong doing by associating with a sinner, thus, becoming a sinner himself. By clearing Zacchaeus' name Jesus clears, by implication, his own also.[29]

If Zacchaeus is not a sinner, then it can be inferred from the scholars defending his vindication as the proper interpretation of the story that it is the crowd that is wrong in its appreciation of Zacchaeus. Mitchell states that if Luke intended to

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[25] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1220-1.

[26] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1221-2.

[27] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 153.

[28] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 154.

[29] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 159.

show Zacchaeus' fresh resolution, the murmuring would be justified on the basis of his sinful life so far. However, what the reader is invited to consider is that the murmuring of the crowd is an unjustifiable action.[30]

There are two other references to "murmuring" in Luke (5:30 and 15:2) and the three of them taken together "have a pejorative quality for Luke".[31] From this Ravens concludes that it reinforces Luke's presentation of the misunderstanding of the crowd which is looking for Zacchaeus' repentance and forgiveness. However, Ravens continues trying to see a certain logic in the murmuring of the crowd because of the nature of Zacchaeus' activity since toll collectors were seen as dishonest people and collaborators with the occupying forces. In response to this common view of toll collectors, Luke tries to change this perception and show that being a sinner is not a necessary corollary of being a toll collector. The underlying purpose is to make acceptable in the Christian community the presence of those who, although having socially despised occupations, were faithful believers.[32] However, acknowledging the difficulty of the fact that the crowd does not believe Zacchaeus when stating his innocence and charitable attitude, Malina and Rohrbaugh insist on the vindication of Zacchaeus for his ongoing and habitual attitude towards alms giving and restitution of what had

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[30] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 158-9.

[31] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 24.

[32] Ravens, "Triptych?" (1991) 24-5.

been taken by deception, and criticise the position of the crowd as a "stereotyping reaction".[33]

Finally, Green presents Zacchaeus as someone within the frame of the Kingdom of God, in line with the message preached by John the Baptist (3:10-14). The message of the Baptist on "good fruits" appears to Green to be a proper setting in which to interpret Zacchaeus' response to the accusations of the crowd. Against customary religious patterns such as fasting, praying and tithing he "possesses insight into and a commitment to the values of Jesus' mission that are exemplary."[34] Consequently, Zacchaeus is part of the people of God, and Jesus' words testify to the reality of his status as a son of Abraham and vindicate him in front of a crowd that does not acknowledge this and treats him as an "outsider".[35]

In sum, on the basis of the translation of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι as present continuous and the lack of salvation-related terms, some scholars emphasize the view that Luke is presenting Zacchaeus as a morally upright toll collector on whom the crowd passes a wrong judgement and whom Jesus defends as a true Son of Abraham. The idea behind the story would be Luke's attempt to vindicate those members of the Christian community who encountered opposition because of their despised jobs. However, another reading is possible, which would take full account of Luke's theology, particularly drawing on those motifs that have

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[33] Malina and Rohrbaugh, Social-Science (1992) 387.

[34] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 671-2.

[35] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 672-3.

been recognised as part of his theological construction of the conversion pericopae.

7.3 THE CONVERSION OF ZACCHAEUS

7.3.1 Seeking to See (19:1-4)

In contrast to the vindication hypothesis, the alternative view propounded in this study is that it is in Zacchaeus' actual encounter with Jesus that he acquires salvation which he evidences through his new attitude towards his possessions. According to the Lukan account and almost at the end of the travel narrative, Jesus is said to be entering Jericho, in his last stop before reaching Jerusalem, the object of his journey.[36] It is in this city near Jerusalem in which Zacchaeus is found, whom Luke defines as ἀρχιτελώνης and πλούσιος (19:2). The word ἀρχιτελώνης is a hapax legomenon not only in Luke and in the New Testament but also in the whole of Greek literature of the time.[37] As a toll collector, Zacchaeus had to be a very wealthy person since the right to collect taxes was granted to the highest bidder who paid in advance.[38] Luke mentions that Zacchaeus is a toll collector in Jericho. He probably leads a group of toll collectors whose role is to collect "tolls on goods coming into Judea from Perea,

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[36] See, Conzelmann, Theology of St. Luke (1960) 18-94; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 164-71.

[37] Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 433; O'Hanlon, "Story of Zacchaeus," (1981) 2.

[38] Schmidt, "Taxation, Jewish," (2000) 1165.

Luke 19:1 f. If Jericho was not directly on the border it could hardly be avoided by those travelling from Perea to Jerusalem, to Bethel, or to the North."[39]

The fact that Zacchaeus is a toll collector points to his open attitude towards Jesus, shown elsewhere in Luke in those references to toll collectors in which they are depicted as the ones positively responding to his ministry. Thus, Levi is a toll collector who follows Jesus when he calls him (5:27). Likewise, toll collectors and sinners are those who acknowledge God's plan in the ministry of Jesus (7:29) and they are also introduced as the ones who gather around Jesus to listen to his teaching (15:1). It is the attitude of a toll collector that is presented in the Parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector as the right one before God (18:10). Even already during the preaching ministry of John it is the toll collectors who show a positive attitude towards his message (3:12). Thus a favourable view of toll collectors is presented in Luke on the basis of their response to the divine initiative at work in the ministry of Jesus.[40]

Such a position allowed Zacchaeus to amass a large amount of money so that he is πλούσιος. This expression is used often in Luke (11 times in contrast with the three times in Matthew and the twice in Mark) and it appears for the first time in the passage on the blessings and the woes (6:17-26). There, Jesus laments the

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[39] Michel, "τελώνης," TDNT 8.98.

[40] Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 433.

position of the rich whose wealth is presented negatively in contrast with the position of the poor who are promised the Kingdom.

In a society in which most people live close to subsistence level[41] the definition of Zacchaeus as πλούσιος makes him a conspicuous figure. He is one of the few exceptions to the crude description of life in this period by MacMullen, who states that no "large percentage of the people in the Roman Empire can have lived their lives through without at least once wondering where the next meal was to come from".[42] Zacchaeus is beyond such a precarious position, but because such concepts as "rich" and "poor" do not only convey economic aspects but also social and moral ones, he is not a recipient of honour either. Being rich is morally interpreted depending on the source of wealth and what is done with it. In the case of rich toll collectors such as Zacchaeus, their wealth provides them with a living standard above the majority of their fellow citizens, but the fraudulent connotations attached to their office place them among those despised in society. Luke's Jewish readers would resent such a co-operation for after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. "all Jews in the empire were required to pay a special extra head tax of 2 denarii each year; it was the equivalent of the tax that had been paid earlier for the maintenance of the Temple",[43] a tax that toll collectors would collect from them.

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[41] Garnsey & Saller, Roman Empire (1987) 43.

[42] MacMullen, Enemies (1967) 249.

[43] Stambaugh & Balch, Environment (1986) 78.

The double definition of Zacchaeus as ἀρχιτελώνης and πλούσιος becomes for Green a paradox of the text.[44] On the one hand there is a social figure, a rich man, who provokes rejection because of the way he has made his fortune. Such a pejorative characterisation of the rich runs through the entire Gospel of Luke (1:53; 6:24; 12:13-21; 14:12-14; 16:19-31; 18:18-30) and is summarised in the statement of Jesus, "how hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (18:24). On the other hand there is the favourable characterisation of toll collectors as people responding well to the message of the Kingdom. From such a tension embodied in Zacchaeus, the outcome keeps in line with the rest of the stories about toll collectors in which their encounter with the message of the Kingdom (first through the preaching of John the Baptist and afterwards through Jesus') results in their responding favourably to the message.

The action in the story of Zacchaeus starts with the interest of this chief toll collector "trying to see who Jesus was" ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν (19:3). This straightforward action will move to a secondary role as the story develops, to give prominence to the action of Jesus who also is "seeking" and "seeing". The idea that Zacchaeus wants to see Jesus does not necessarily clarify what he is looking for in Jesus. It is in 19:3 that Zacchaeus is said to want to know who Jesus is, so that it could be thought of as mere curiosity on Zacchaeus' part. Plummer qualifies such a curiosity by comparing Zacchaeus' seeing to that of the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus (John 12:21) in contrast to the interest of Herod

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[44] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 668-9.

in seeing him (23:8).[45] Loewe argues that "it is important to ascertain what Zacchaeus was seeking" on the basis of Lukan teaching of "proper" and "improper" seeking. According to the promise in 11:9-10 that "he who seeks finds", those looking for the Kingdom of God will find it. The strength of Loewe's point lays on his concluding sentence "Zacchaeus (...) is open to seeing who Jesus really is",[46] which confirms the positive view that Luke portrays of the toll collectors towards the ministry of Jesus.

Dennis Hamm has analysed the different references to "seeing" in the third gospel. He seeks to "demonstrate that when Luke presents Jesus either as enabler or as object of physical seeing, he does so in a way that symbolizes the deeper seeing which is the faith that perceives Jesus' true identity and acts upon it".[47] Concerning the story of Zacchaeus, he builds up his analysis in connection with two other encounters, namely, the physical healing of a blind man (18:35-43) and the rich ruler (18:18-30). Centring on the account of the blind man, the other two stories refer to two men "blinded" by their wealth, one of them, the ruler, does not gain "sight" after his encounter with Jesus while the other, Zacchaeus, "sees God's salvation" (19:9; cf. 2:30).[48]

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[45] Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 433.

[46] Loewe, "Interpretation of Lk 19:1-10," (1974) 323-5.

[47] Hamm, "Sight," (1986) 458.

[48] Hamm, "Sight," (1986) 464.

Nevertheless, although Luke refers to Zacchaeus' interest in seeing Jesus, given the number of people gathered it is not possible for him "because he was short in stature" (ὅτι τῇ ἡλικίᾳ μικρὸς ἦν, 19:3), so that he tried to see Jesus from a sycamore tree. Green notices that a proper translation of ἡλικία would make reference not to physical shortness but to age, namely, that he was young. The crowd would have no regard for such a young person, so that Zacchaeus would not be able to make room for he himself to see the parade. Green is right in making it a matter of honour when implying that the crowd impeded access to Zacchaeus because of its low regard for him,[49] although probably not because of his age but because of his office.[50]

Parsons has argued that together with being a chief toll collector and rich, Luke describes Zacchaeus as short in stature, a definition conveying moral significance like the other two depictions.[51] He refers to the study of the relationship between the physical and moral called "physiognomics", which considers elements such as movements, shapes, colours, voice, hair. In Zacchaeus' case, shortness in stature would be interpreted as "'smallness in spirit' (μικροψυχία)".[52] According to the ideas of the time about physiognomics, Zacchaeus' short stature is linked with his moral condition. Thus the crowd's accusation of "sinner" refers not only to his wrong doings but also to his physical stature which is the result of sin (cf. 2

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[49] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 669-70.

[50] It becomes difficult to imagine how young Zacchaeus could be if he already has become both a chief tax collector and rich. Undoubtedly, both conditions would require a certain number of years to say nothing of the age he would have been expected to be to get such a job for the first time.

[51] Parsons, "Short in Stature," (2001) 50.

[52] Parsons, "Short in Stature," (2001) 53.

Sam 12:15-23; Ruth *Rab* 6.4; John 9:2). Therefore, according to Parsons, Luke's mentioning of Zacchaeus' short stature has the rhetorical effect on the audience of emphasizing his sinfulness.[53]

7.3.2 The Encounter (19:5-6)

A key moment in the story comes when Jesus looks up and thus sees Zacchaeus and talks to him (19:5). It is then that there is an interaction between the two. And it is Jesus who addresses Zacchaeus and not the other way around. This idea of Jesus taking the initiative both in addressing Zacchaeus and becoming the host fits the different passages in Luke in which Jesus takes the lead in addressing people; it is only in these stories that a positive outcome of the encounter takes place. In those stories in which someone wishes to follow Jesus the outcome is a negative one and the person does not become his disciple. "It is an event which lies beyond the realm of human volition: one cannot decide to become a follower of Jesus; the initiative rests solely with him."[54] Thus, the story of Zacchaeus moves from his positive interest in seeking and seeing who Jesus is (19:3-4) to Jesus seeing Zacchaeus (19:5) as an object of his ministry of seeking the lost (19:10).

It is at that moment that Jesus asks him to come down from the tree, which he must do hastily. Σπεύδειν is only used in the New Testament by Luke, with the exception of 2 Pet 3:12. The other occurrence in Luke also shows the promptness

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[53] Parsons, "Small in Stature," (2001) 55.

[54] Droge, "Call Stories" (1983) 245-57, esp. 254-7. Cf., Luke 9:57-62.

of the shepherds in going to meet Jesus (2:16). The reason for such haste is that it is σήμερον he is going to meet him at his own place. The initiative is on Jesus' side, who invites himself to the house of Zacchaeus. Σήμερον can be interpreted both in its most literal and immediate sense but also as a reference to the salvific plan of God already at work in Jesus. Although it is not an exclusive Lukan use, "Jesus' use of the term 'today' is highly suggestive, since elsewhere in Luke's narrative it is used to communicate the immediacy of salvation."[55] Thus, the very day Jesus is born the angels proclaim, "to you is born this day a saviour" (ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν σήμερον σωτὴρ, 2:11). In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus begins his public ministry by disclosing and assuming the salvific plan of God prophesised by Isaiah by saying: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραφὴ αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν, 4:21). The penitent criminal on the cross is assured that "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (σήμερον μετ' ἐμοῦ ἔσῃ ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ, 23:43).

"Behind Jesus' summons lies a necessity imposed on him by God (δεῖ); the implication is that a divine plan is being worked out."[56] The reason for such haste is Jesus' δεῖ.[57] The various references in Luke to the different situations Jesus "must" take up (2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:16, 33; 15:32; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44, 46) set the actual framework for interpreting 19:5 as part of the "preordained

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[55] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 670. This emphasis on today's availability of salvation marks the soteriological shift that has taken place within Lukan studies from Conzelmann's eschatological emphasis to the actual consensus on Luke's stress on the immediacy of salvation.

[56] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 697.

[57] For further reading on divine necessity see Squires, Plan (1993) 155-85.

divine plan. It concretises the mission of the Son of Man stated in 19:10."[58] Squires maintains that Luke often uses "the language of necessity", even for apologetic reasons, "for recognition of the inevitability of the divine will encourages repentance, that is the adoption of Christian beliefs and practices, in conformity with the divine plan."[59] Thus, Zacchaeus is presented as acknowledging the divine plan of salvation in Jesus,[60] which makes him hurry to meet and receive Jesus.

Luke's emphasis on divine initiative displayed in the ministry of Jesus and expressed in terms of "necessity", as has already been shown above, aims at repentance. That is the expected response to the divine salvific initiative articulated as "the call of sinners to repentance" (5:32), "the seeking of the lost" (19:10), which is towards those despised by members of the socio-religious strata, namely, to the sinners, the toll collector, the lost. To them Jesus came to seek out and to save (19:10). Thus, while Zacchaeus is said to be seeking to see who Jesus is (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τίς ἐστιν, 19:3), it is the divine initiative at work in Jesus that takes the priority, "for the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, 19:10),[61] a summary of what has taken effect in Zacchaeus after Jesus has found him.

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[58] Loewe, "Interpretation of Lk 19:1-10," (1974) 326.

[59] Squires, Plan (1993) 185.

[60] The salvific plan of God in Jesus echoes Is 40:5 "And all flesh shall the salvation of God."

[61] In 5:24 the authority of the Son of Man to forgive sins has already being established so that seeking the lost and conferring salvation upon them, on the one hand, and forgiving their sins, on the other, become synonymous activities, which come under the divine purpose of salvation.

Moreover, in the chapter on the preaching of John the Baptist, it was argued that 3:10-14 is a Lukan addition to exemplify John's demand to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (3:8). These verses also serve the purpose of reinforcing the Lukan teaching on the right attitude towards the connection between possessions and the poor and repentance. This connection between repentance and possessions is also present, for instance, in John's preaching of a baptism of repentance in which the questions in relation to what to do concerning repentance are answered in reference to honest and responsible use of possessions towards the needy (3:10-14). In the story of the conversion of Levi he is said to have left everything to follow Jesus (5:33).[62] Or in the story of the conversion of a woman of the city (7:36-50), which Luke links with the account of women ministering to the needs of the disciples out of their own means (8:1-3), Luke thereby maintains the correlation between repentance and the reinterpreted attitude to wealth and possessions. The story of the encounter between Jesus and a ruler (18:18-30) ends in failure as the ruler is not willing to sell his possessions and give them to the poor as Jesus requests, which is to be interpreted as a lack of repentance. With regard to Zacchaeus, although it will be developed later in more detail, it can be said here that what Zacchaeus is manifesting through his attitude towards his possessions is his bearing of fruits worthy of repentance.

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[62] It is interesting to notice how Green is ready to acknowledge the parallelism between Jesus' call to Levi (5:27), his leaving of everything (5:28) and the concluding statement that he (Jesus) had come to call sinners to repentance (5:32) as an indication of Levi's repentance (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 244). In a similar situation, namely the calling of Zacchaeus (19:5), his (Zacchaeus') giving half of his possessions to the poor and making fourfold restitution of anything he defrauded (19:8) and the final statement in which Jesus affirms his having come to seek and save the lost (19:10), Green denies that there are the elements of "a story of conversion" (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 672).

Another means Luke uses to confirm the reality of Zacchaeus' repentance is that he is "happy to welcome him [Jesus]" (ὑπεδέξατο αὐτὸν χαίρων, 19:6). The verb χαίρειν is frequently used in Luke (18 times) but otherwise is very rare in the synoptic Gospels (3 times in Matthew; none in Mark). According to Morrice, "*Chairein* is derived from the root *char*-, from which we get not only the noun *chara* (=joy) but also *charis* (=favour, grace). (...) The etymological connection between these two nouns suggests, on the face of it, that 'favour' or 'grace' is something that brings 'joy' to people".[63] He follows by acknowledging that even though χαίρειν and χαρά have a broad secular use, they appear often in the LXX "to give expression to joy in a religious context"[64] (1 Sam 19:5; 1 Kings 8:66; Ps 126:1-3 Joel 2:21). In Luke the announcement by the angel to the shepherds of the Saviour's birth is presented as "good news of great joy" (2:10). There is also Jesus' exhortation to the seventy-two to "rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (10:20). In chapter 15 the three related parables ("The Lost Sheep", "The Lost Coin" and "The Lost Son") conclude with appeals for joy because there is "rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents" (15:7), and "rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (15:10), and a reason "to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (15:32). Thus, also in the case of the repenting and joyful Zacchaeus, in the gospel of Luke, joy becomes the manifestation of the forgiving and therefore salvific encounter with the Jesus.[65]

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[63] Morrice, Joy (1984) 68.

[64] Morrice, Joy (1984) 69.

[65] Johnson, Luke SP (1991) 285.

The hospitality, and therefore table-fellowship, event echoes the commending words of Jesus to the seventy-two, "whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set for you; heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (10:8-9). Thus, by accepting Zacchaeus' hospitality Jesus shows that he has forgiven him.[66] "For this man the kingdom of God has made its approach and he has embraced it."[67] It is a common motif in Luke's conversion accounts to portray intimacy and the new relationship with Jesus resulting from his granting of salvation in terms of hospitality, especially around the table (cf. 5:29, 39; 8:3; 15:23-24). The contrast is drawn with those who rejecting the ministry of Jesus do not participate in the celebration but remain "criticising outsiders" (cf. 5:30; 15:28). The parable of the Great Banquet (14:15-24) describes the eschatological reality of the Kingdom as a banquet in which those participating are not the expected guests but the outcasts and despised in society.

7.3.3 The Conflict (19:7)

The moment of conflict arises when the διαγογγύζειν of the crowd comes into play. This text is the first and only time in Luke that a murmuring comes from the crowd; to be more precise, the grumbling comes from <u>all</u> (πάντες διεγόγγυζον, v.7), in clear reference to the already mentioned throng (ὁ ὄχλος, v.3). The word διαγογγύζω appears only twice in the New Testament, both times

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[66] Marshall, <u>Luke</u> NIGTC (1978) 697.

[67] Nolland, <u>Luke</u> WBC (1993) 905.

in Luke, and for a similar purpose, namely, to show criticism of Jesus' mixing with and having table-fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, although in 15:2 it is not the crowds but the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who are blamed for the grumbling. They are also the ones murmuring the same accusation in the story of Levi (5:27-32), although the expression used this time is γογγύζω. After all, table-fellowship becomes an important social device to draw the line between righteous/sinner, honour/shame, insiders/outsiders. This is why

> refusal to share a meal with another serves an important function in this and other cultural contexts: It signifies social ostracism, the designation of some as excluded from an identified group. In this case, Jesus' host and fellow guests were regarded as persons of a lower status to be avoided, especially at the table.[68]

This is what the crowd expects Jesus to do: to refrain from fellowship with Zacchaeus, a sinner. Keeping in view the professional rank of Zacchaeus and the active role of the crowd in the murmuring it can be affirmed that Luke is rendering the positions extreme. Zacchaeus incarnates the focus of Jesus' ministry according to Luke, especially those who are despised by the standards of both popular and official religiosity; Zacchaeus is a toll collector and therefore a sinner. The crowd embodies the misunderstanding of the ministry of Jesus.[69]

When Zacchaeus is described as a sinner, the assumption is not only that he is morally wrong but also that he lives outside the boundaries of the law. It also implies that he is an outsider in a community which makes the Torah the

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[68] Green, "Good News to Whom?" (1994) 70.

[69] From now on, the interaction between Jesus and the people is very rare, but it should not be forgotten that it is chiefly the religious leadership and not the people whom Luke blames for rejecting Jesus. Most of Jesus' words from his entry into Jerusalem onwards carry the burden of his rejection.

measuring stick for belonging to it. Luke exemplifies this reality not only by the accusation of the crowd that Zacchaeus is a sinner but also by Zacchaeus' difficulty seeing Jesus ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου (19:3). Nolland argues that the crowd acts as an impediment to Zacchaeus seeing Jesus, as it was an obstacle for the blind man who wanted to meet Jesus (18:35-42).[70] For York, the fact that Zacchaeus has to climb a tree in order to see Jesus does not only speak of Zacchaeus' size but of "his separation from the rest of the crowd".[71]

It has already been shown that "sinners" were one of the main targets of Jesus' ministry since he declared from the beginning of his ministry in Galilee, "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (οὐκ ἐλήλυθα καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλοὺς εἰς μετάνοιαν, 5:32; cf. 5:27-32; 7:34, 36-50; 15:1-32). The response found in the repentant sinner is that of one with a humble attitude before Jesus, thus acknowledging his sins (cf. 5:8; 7:36-50; 18:13). This action receives the approval of Jesus who states that such a person is made righteous before God, "for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted" (ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται, 18:14).

In such a depiction, the story of Zacchaeus becomes "paradigmatic for Luke's unique treatment of the 'sinner' motif."[72] Jesus is found addressing, among the

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[70] Nolland, Luke WBC (1993) 905. See also Tannehill, Unity (1986)123; Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 671.

[71] York, Last Shall Be First (1991) 158 n.5.

[72] Neale, Sinners (1991) 179.

many in the crowd, one who is acknowledged as a ἁμαρτωλός ἀνήρ (19:7).[73] Zacchaeus' humble attitude towards his possessions which, contrary to the attitude of the rich ruler in 18:18-30,[74] he is ready to give away (19:8), grants him Jesus' forgiveness. Zacchaeus is receiving salvation "today" (19:9). That is what the Son of man has come for (19:10).

Once more in Luke, the question is on the delimiting of who a sinner is. The simple answer would be that he or she is a person who disobeys the Torah through his or her wicked conduct. However, Dunn shows that, while the definition of sinners as "wicked" might be a true explanation, it must be considered that "wickedness, by definition, is conduct outside the boundaries, conduct unacceptable to those inside."[75] Thus, for the Pharisees, always scrupulous of the law and purity rules, sinners are those who do not meet up to those religious demands as they interpreted them.

> The most obvious example of this is where 'sinner' is used more or less as a synonym for 'Gentile': Ps 9:17; Tobit 13:8 (6); *Jub* 23.23-24; *Pss. Sol.* 1.1; 2.1-2; Luke 6:33 = Matt. 5:47; Mark 14:41 pars.; Gal 2:15. In such passages the unifying concept is not that Gentiles are by definition murderers and robbers. Rather it is that their conduct lay outside the boundary of the law.[76]

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[73] O'Hanlon points out that *hamartolos* ('sinful') as an adjective qualifying 'man' is found only in Luke, here, at 5:8 and 24:7" ("Story of Zacchaeus," [1981] 3).

[74] The contrasting parallels between the story of Zacchaeus and that of the rich ruler certainly also tend to convey the twofold way in which Luke represents the response to the Kingdom on the basis of people's attitude when they actually encounter Jesus. Thus, (1) both men hold a high office (ἀρχων, 18:18; ἀρχιτελώνης, 19:2); (2) the ruler says he keeps all the commandments, according to his own evaluation (18:20-21), while Zacchaeus is deemed a sinner with the crowd (19:7); (3) the ruler is very wealthy (18:23) and so is Zacchaeus (19: 2); (4) the ruler refuses to sell his possessions and give them to the poor (18:22-23), but Zacchaeus gives half of his to the poor (19:8); the onlookers wonder, "who then can be saved?" (18:26) while Jesus asserts that "today salvation has come to this [Zacchaeus'] house" (19:9).

[75] Dunn, "Pharisees," (1988) 276.

[76] Dunn, "Pharisees," (1988) 276.

This understanding of ἁμαρτωλός as to who is and is not living by the standards of the law has at least a dual connotation. One approach, which could be regarded as "general", relates to those sins which are commonly acknowledged as such by the wider community. Another one would be that of a "particular" or "factional approach" that would tie the concept and extent of sin to the views of a distinctive group or sect in the community.[77] The generally negative understanding of the office of the toll collector at the time[78] together with Zacchaeus' own recognition of his wrong action (ἐσυκοφάντησα) shows that there is no misunderstanding on the part of the crowd about Zacchaeus as a sinner, any more than there was in the accusations of the Pharisees (cf. 5:30; 15:2).[79]

However, those supporting the vindication theory argue that the crowd's allegation against Zacchaeus is wrong, that the crowd is wrongly accusing him. They miss what is a very relevant question concerning repentance in relation to the ministry of Jesus. Luke is in no way denying that Zacchaeus is a sinner. In fact, based on Luke's theological interest in emphasising the universality of sin and consequently of the need of repentance, the characterisation of people like Zacchaeus as sinners serve the purpose of conveying the new reality of

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[77] Dunn provides considerable testimony from Jewish sources (1 Maccabees; *Jubilees*; *Enoch* corpus; Dead Sea Scrolls) supporting his view of how a particular understanding of sin was current within given groups who would regard all those not living by their own particular standards as sinners.

[78] In later Jewish writings there are references to toll collectors perceived as being dishonest (*b. Sanh.* 25b), paired with thieves and murderers (*m. Ned.* 3:4; *m. B. Qam.* 10:2) and linked with uncleanness (*m. Tohar.* 7:6).

[79] It can be argued that it is not the Pharisees but the crowd who accuses Zacchaeus of being a sinner. However, such an attitude consistently reflects the Luke's characterisation of the Pharisees.

repentance and forgiveness that the ministry of Jesus bears. This is also the case in the story of the conversion of Levi (5:27-32) in which the mistake of the accusing Pharisees and scribes is not that they see Levi as a sinner but in the fact that they do not acknowledge his subsequent repentance. The problem there is the way in which repentance is displayed. Against conventional expressions of repentance such as fasting and prayers (cf. 1 Kgs 21:27; Isa 58:1-9; Joel 1:14; 2:15-27; Luke 18:11-12), Jesus' disciples eat and drink (cf. 5:33). Once more, Jesus' salvific ministry invites people to repentance, which is joyfully manifested in hospitable table-fellowship. If what 19:8 represents were Zacchaeus' customary conduct and action, the crowd would be strongly supportive of a person already giving half of his goods to the poor and making fourfold reparation for any devious business done. They would not be criticising him as a sinner, but probably would regard him as the local hero.

It is clear, then, that Luke wants his readers to regard Zacchaeus as a sinner from the commonly held point of view about toll collectors: and Zacchaeus was a chief toll collector.[80] The question is not whether the preconception of toll collectors as sinners is accurate or not. The point is that Luke assumes the already existing conception in order to convey his own message in the story. To make sure Luke's audience gets the picture clear, Zacchaeus is presented also as a rich person, which should already be obvious by means of his prominent (and commonly

[80] However true the connotations of the word "sinner" at that time when applied to Zacchaeus, Luke has those opposing Jesus introducing the word and Jesus borrowing it for the sake of the argument, as it were. See Green, Theology (1995) 85.

dishonest) position. In O'Hanlon words, "he [Zacchaeus] is a chief, rich tax collector, the sinner supreme."[81]

The murmuring of the crowd resembles that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law in 5:30 and 15:2 when they criticise Jesus' gathering and eating with toll collectors and sinners.[82] Against the view of Mitchell who does not see the coming of Jesus to Zacchaeus' house as primarily, if at all, related to table-fellowship but to hospitality,[83] there should be no doubt that the issue at stake *is* Jesus' table-fellowship, since such a distinction is alien to the context.[84] As is the case with the Pharisees elsewhere in Luke concerning their failure to acknowledge God's plan at work in Jesus' ministry, they, both the Pharisees and the crowd, fail to recognize that the kingdom of God is among them (17:20-21). In contrast, Jesus blesses the disciples for they can see which many others before would have wanted to see but could not, namely, the reality of the Kingdom manifested in and through Jesus. This is also a way to evidence the reversal of the story; those who can see, that is the (self-) righteous, are unable to see or to

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[81] O'Hanlon, "Story of Zacchaeus," (1981) 9.

[82] For a helpful tabular scheme of the three related instances mentioned here (5:27-32; 15:1-32; 19:1-10) see Hamm, "Once Again," (1988) 436-7.

[83] Mitchell, "Zacchaeus Revisited" (1990) 161.

[84] It sounds odd and artificial to make such a distinction between table-fellowship and hospitality, since in that kind of cultural setting there would be no hospitality without table-fellowship being implied (cf. Stambaugh and Balch, Environment [1986] 38, 63-4, 139). Even those interested in emphasising Zacchaeus' hospitality in order to establish a stronger link with the story of Abraham, to argue for a vindication instead of a conversion of Zacchaeus, should not forget that Abraham's hospitality is clearly linked to a food sharing gathering (cf. Gen 18). According to Koenig, who centres his study of first century Judaism "in three of Judaism's religious institutions: the Sabbath, the synagogue, and the travelling pairs of Palestinian teachers" these travelling pairs would teach the Torah to the family offering them hospitality in return for food and lodging (Koenig, Hospitality [1985] 16-70). Also, Dresner presents the Sabbath meal as an act of hospitality open to other people, mainly those in need (Dresner, Sabbath [1970] 54).

acknowledge who Jesus is and therefore they oppose him and also his ministry towards the lost such as Zacchaeus. However, the one who is not allowed to see because of the obstruction of the opposing crowd shows his openness to see who Jesus really is and therefore attains salvation. Jesus welcomes him into his eschatological community, which Luke graphically illustrates by their fellowship inside the house in contrast with the criticising crowd outside.

Therefore, there is here an intentional Lukan linkage with the story of Zacchaeus of the two previous occasions on which there was a condemning murmuring from the Pharisees and the teachers of the law because of Jesus' table-fellowship with toll collectors and sinners (5:27-32; 15:1-2).[85] The murmuring caused by Jesus' table-fellowship with one who is both a toll collector and a sinner on this occasion comes from the crowd.

From this moment, the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus moves from the open place, where the crowd intervenes actively, to the later meeting at Zacchaeus' home, in which the crowd is absent but its reproach induces the following dialogue.[86] Matson indicates that such an act of hospitality represented by Jesus' staying at someone's house is a Lukan motif. Thus, Luke's use of

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[85] The conflict, always present in these "table talks", is introduced by the phrase καὶ ἰδόντες (cf. 7:37; 11:38; 14:2; 19:7).

[86] O'Hanlon notices that a story reaching a turning point in the middle of the narration is a Lukan characteristic present in many of his "parables, as indeed, by his over-all scheme. Whereas the Marcan parable is a one-for-one allegory and Matthew's are eschatological with crisis at the end rather than at the middle." Thus, we can see that "the shape of the story is a central crisis flanked by a 'before' and 'after'." ("Story of Zacchaeus," [1981] 5-6).

"μένω and compounds to denote acts of hospitality"[87] dominates in the Synoptics (once both in Matthew and Mark, seven times in Luke: 1:56; 8:27; 9:4; 10:7; 19:5; 24:29 twice). There are many instances in which a house is the setting in which both Jesus himself and his message of the Kingdom of God are acknowledged. For example, after Levi decides to follow Jesus he holds a great banquet in Jesus' honour (5:29). When Jesus sends the Twelve, the sign of reception of the Kingdom is the hospitality offered to them (9:1-6) as it is also the case of the Seventy-two (10:1-12). In the "Road to Emmaus" story, it is in the house of the two disciples that they recognised the risen Christ (24:13-32).

7.3.4 Money Matters (19:8)

Building on the implications drawn from Zacchaeus' fellowship with Jesus, there is a more conclusive element which shows his repentance, namely his new attitude towards his possessions. But before that, it should be noticed that Zacchaeus calls Jesus κύριος (19:8), which is also significant. It is Luke among the Synoptics who most often ascribes this designation to Jesus in the material before the resurrection. It could well be possible that it is only a polite treatment by Zacchaeus ("sir"), although a different reading could be plausible in light of the connected story of the rich ruler (18:18-30) who addresses Jesus as διδάσκαλος ἀγαθός (18:18). There the question posed by Peter "who then can be saved?" (18:26) is answered by Jesus who replies that "what is impossible with men is possible with God" (18:27). The attachment of the ruler to his wealth

[87] Matson, Household (1996) 129.

seems an overwhelming obstacle to entering the Kingdom. However, Zacchaeus' use of κύριος is interpreted as a way of acknowledging the lordship of Jesus. Now 18:27 has become a reality; what seemed to be impossible for men happens as the result of divine intervention.

An extensive and detailed exposition of the position of those scholars who interpret Zacchaeus' statement about his goods as a self-defence and vindication has already been presented above. The position taken here runs counter to this. Even without having offered a translation of the verbs δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι, with which much of their argumentation starts, and with some other relevant material still to come from the remaining verses, some of the Lukan clues that this is a conversion/salvation story have already been demonstrated. Thus, Zacchaeus has been introduced as a sinner both because of the stigma attached to the office of toll collector and because of his (later spelled out in more detail) own acknowledgement of dishonesty. The Lukan interest in presenting Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom as being primarily concerned with the poor, the outcasts, and, as in this case, with toll collectors and sinners, makes Zacchaeus a potential recipient of God's salvific initiative through Jesus' invitation to fellowship. The Son of Man is seeking the lost for whom salvation comes today. This toll collector, in line with other similar stories in Luke, shows his repentance through his joyful acceptance of Jesus' forgiveness by offering him hospitality. Everything, according to the divine necessity is effected by the salvific plan of God through Jesus.

Nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that the use of the present active indicative tenses, as in the case of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι, allows for both an iterative and a future translation. This is why the study of the context of these verbs has been so important, since "the question is not so much how those present tenses are translated as how they are to be understood."[88] The established context of the story requires a future present as the best reading of Zacchaeus' intentions, in light of the evidence presented so far. As a present resolution showing his repentance and inclusion in the Kingdom of God, Zacchaeus declares: "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much" (τὰ ἡμίσιά μου τῶν ὑπαρχόντων, κύριε, τοῖς πτωχοῖς δίδωμι, και εἴ τινόςτι ἐσυκοφάντησα ἀποδίδωμι τετραπλοῦν, 19:8) which Marshall takes as

> a reaction to the initiative of Jesus and to the objections of the crowd. In order that Jesus may be freed from the suspicion of consorting with a sinner he makes a public declaration of his intention to live a new life. In such a situation a declaration of intent was an adequate sign of repentance.[89]

What Zacchaeus has determined with regard to his wealth refers to his possessions, not to his income, which he will give to the poor, for τῶν ὑπαρχόντων means "that which one has possessed all along, capital" and not

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[88] Hamm, "Once Again" (1988) 431.

[89] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 697. Also, Tannehill affirms that "Zacchaeus' announcement is an act of repentance" ("Rhetoric" [1993] 203).

"income",[90] so that he meant a one-off action.[91] Marshall quotes from Strack and Billerbeck[92] what was customary among rabbis with regard to alms giving, which amounted to 20% of possessions or 20% of income in the following years, but nothing close to the 50% of Zacchaeus.[93] In the context of Roman legislation, Kerr has shown examples of fourfold restitutions, when someone accused another falsely in court.[94] Nolland mentions a text from Josephus (*Ant.* 16.3) as a possible example of "a Roman influence on Judaism" in this matter.[95]

'Αποδίδωμι refers to actions of the past and not those of the future since it would not make any sense to present Zacchaeus as already thinking of future unjust actions yet to be perpetrated. As Culpepper has pointed out "Zacchaeus does not envision the possibility of defrauding others in the future, nor does he regularly defraud others and repay them. Rather, Zacchaeus vows to repay all those whom he has defrauded in the past (and by implication to take care not to defraud anyone else in the future)".[96]

Also, the other reference to ἐσυκοφάντησα in the New Testament is found in Luke 3:14, where John the Baptist urges the soldiers "do not extort money from

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[90] Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 435. A logical consequence of the practice of giving away half of one's goods is that it could have only happened twice, so that Zacchaeus would not be rich any longer. (cf. Zahn Lukas KzNT [1913] 622, as cited by Hamm, "Once Again," [1988] 434).

[91] Hamm, "Once Again" (1988) 434.

[92] Str-B (1956) 546-51.

[93] Cf. Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 697.

[94] Kerr, "Decision," (1986) 70.

[95] Luke WBC (1993) 906.

[96] Culpepper, "Seeing," (1994) 442.

anyone by threats or false accusation" (Μηδένα διασείσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε) which makes us interpret εἴ... ἐσυκοφάντησα "as a delicate way of referring to past injustices".[97]

Important as the amount offered by Zacchaeus is, the fact of his giving becomes another clue to the reading of the present text as a conversion story, since "restitution by the sinner in the appropriate cases was part and parcel of repentance. It also underwrites Luke's modification of Jesus' invitation to sinners as a call to them to repent."[98] Zacchaeus' attitude towards wealth appears to change and it does not become an impediment to accepting Jesus' message. Luke presents it as a sign of ultimate allegiance. It is in this sense that God and money become mutually exclusive (cf. 16:13). Once Zacchaeus finds that his wealth no longer masters him, he decides to share it. From this it can be concluded that the proof test of the conversion of a rich person is his or her decision regarding his wealth. Thus Zacchaeus, by his words and actions towards his wealth is not only confessing his sins but also repenting of them.

The emphasis Luke is making lies not so much on opposing wealth as intrinsically evil but on the proper use of it. Excessive allegiance to wealth separates people from the Kingdom of God, as in the cases of Luke's portrayal of

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[97] Hamm, "Once Again," (1988) 434. He mentions Luke's "sensitivity to the LXX connotations of words, and s*ykophantein* usually translates *asak* ('to oppress, worry, extort' in BDB; see, for example, Ps 118:122 LXX and Prov 14:31;22:16; 28:3)." Marshall translates it as "'from whomsoever I have wrongfully exacted anything'" (Luke NIGTC [1978] 698).

[98] Evans, Saint Luke (1990) 662-3.

religious leaders (16:14-15) and of the rich ruler (18:18-30), in contrast with "the positive use of possessions as a sign of response to the gift of the Kingdom."[99] Such a view on the right use of possessions was very radical in the time of Luke's audience for it not only implied the giving up of one's own possessions, but also giving them to the poor. According to Stambaugh and Balch, the concept of "charity" was unknown in the Greco-Roman world. All they knew was those donations rich people made, not altruistically but expecting something in return which increased their position of power and honour. "Charity for the poor and the destitute, who could not offer anything in exchange, was virtually unknown."[100] This idea is clearly presented in the Parable of the Wedding Feast (14:7-14), where Jesus exhorts people to invite and share table-fellowship with those who cannot pay the invitation back. This is also what the rich ruler is asked to do and fails to carry out (18:22-23), but Zacchaeus puts into practice. As a sign of his repentance, he is giving half of his goods to the poor, to those who can not pay him back.

7.3.5 Announcing Salvation (19:9-10)

Now the words of Jesus, who in the light of the progression and outcome of the present episode concludes: "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (19:9-10) must be addressed. These two verses become a summary

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[99] Johnson, Literary Function of Possessions (1977) 155. He speaks of a two-step process. A first step would be "separation from possessions" and a second one would be "the bestowal of them on others."

[100] Stambaugh & Balch, Social Environment (1986) 64.

statement from Jesus of both what has already happened and of the travel narrative itself.

The use of σήμερον twice (19:5, 9) in this story shows the Lukan correlation of this expression and σωτηρία[101] which is at hand with the presence of Jesus. In 19:5 Jesus says to Zacchaeus: ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ σου δεῖ με μεῖναι which in 19:9 turns into σήμερον σωτηρία τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ ἐγένετο so that the reciprocity and identification between Jesus himself (who must come to Zacchaeus' house) and the event of salvation (which has come to the house) can be seen. "The parallelism of the two phrases within the pericope suggests the identity between the coming of Jesus and the coming of salvation."[102] Hence, Luke shows Jesus bestowing salvation on Zacchaeus by his own presence and authoritative word, or that, to put it differently, by accepting Jesus into his house, salvation has come to Zacchaeus.

In connection with 19:8, Tannehill argues in favour of a futuristic present interpretation of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι as the result of Zacchaeus' salvific experience. He maintains that the use of σήμερον concerning the σωτηρία that had come to Zacchaeus' house would only make sense in the context of "a decision made at that moment (which must be carried out in the future)."[103]

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[101] Only Luke in the Synoptic Gospels uses σωτηρία or any of its related forms.

[102] Loewe, "Interpretation of Lk 19:1-10," (1974) 325.

[103] Tannehill, "Rhetoric," (1993) 203.

The logic of the connection of σωτηρία with the fact that καθότι καὶ αὐτὸς υἱὸς Ἀβραάμ ἐστιν prevents one from taking the "son of Abraham" issue as an ethnical matter only. This would be a redundant remark, as Goulder has stated.[104] Thus, he sees a connection in this sentence with the Benedictus (1:67-79) in which "salvation" occurs three times and is praised as a present reality. Also, Abraham is mentioned as the one to whom the promised was issued. The promise of salvation to Abraham is now a reality both as a deliverance from the enemy (1:71) and as forgiveness of sins (1:77). The underlying idea is that as Abraham's works counted as faith, that is, his deeds were the proof of his faith, so also were the deeds of Zacchaeus. The imperative "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (ποιήσατε οὖν καρποὺς ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας, 3:8), is pronounced in the context of John the Baptist's preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins, to people not repenting but appealing to their kinship to Abraham. This imperative serves as the corollary of the invitation to repentance made by the Baptist to the soldiers (3:14), who committed the same fault as Zacchaeus, συκοφάντέω, an exhortation also expressed in ethical terms. Repentance from sin therefore is shown by way of deeds and is the sole expected response to the divine offer of salvation through Jesus.

A salvation event has taken place in Zacchaeus' household, according to the divine plan, namely, "for the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost" (ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, 19:10). The

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[104] Goulder, Luke (1989) 679.

reference to Zacchaeus as a "lost one" is linked to the fact that he is a sinner. The parallelism is not an arbitrary one. In chapter 15 there are clear examples in which the idea of "lost" and "sinner" go hand in hand. Thus, the three parables of which chapter 15 consists centre on a lost sheep (15:1-7), a lost coin (15:8-10) and a lost son (15:11-32). Each case is intended to represent the sinner who, once lost, has been found. It is these lost ones, these sinners, who the Son of Man has come to seek and save, just as in the story of Zacchaeus. "These associations between being lost, found, and knowing salvation, on the one hand, and the sinner repenting, on the other, surely prepare the reader to understand 19:1-10 as implying that Zacchaeus's encounter with the Lord is a matter of a sinner experiencing salvation through conversion from sinfulness."[105]

As a summary of the interpretation of Luke 19:1-10 as the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus, the following different elements leading to such a conclusion have been considered. (1) Luke presents a chief toll collector Zacchaeus as a sinner, representing both a conventional view of his office and of his own wrong deeds. (2) As a toll collector Zacchaeus belongs to the category of those Luke depicts as having an open attitude towards Jesus, and positively responding to his ministry. (3) Although Zacchaeus seeks to see who Jesus is, it is actually Jesus who sees him and thus, taking the initiative, invites Zacchaeus to his fellowship, and therefore to the fellowship of the eschatological Kingdom of God which he embodies. After all, that is what the Son of Man does - he seeks out and saves the

[105] Hamm, "Once Again," (1988) 436.

lost. (4) Zacchaeus accepts the invitation joyfully and has table-fellowship with Jesus. Both hospitality and table-fellowship are signs of that twofold acceptance represented here, namely, Jesus accepting Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus accepting Jesus, and, consequently, forgiveness and repentance. (5) The crowd, which for the first time comes close in its views to that of the Pharisees, criticises Jesus for his table-fellowship with a tax-collector and sinner, which, at the end of the travel narrative, is a significant clue to its misunderstanding of the ministry of Jesus. (6) Zacchaeus demonstrates his repentance by deciding to give away half of his possessions to the poor and with the other half to make a fourfold restitution to those he had deceived. (7) Jesus acknowledges Zacchaeus' repentance and grants him forgiveness by stating that this very day salvation has come to his house. (8) The divine purpose (necessity) has reached its goal in Zacchaeus' salvation, for that is what Jesus has come for, to seek and save the lost. (9) The action of Zacchaeus restores him as a son of Abraham, something he is by birth, but which is fully disclosed by his deeds worthy of repentance.

7.4 CONCLUSION

The contrasts between the two positions outlined above are well known. The aim has been to prove that there is more evidence in favour of the interpretation of this story as the conversion of Zacchaeus. If the summaries of the two positions were to be contrasted, it would be seen that (1) there is an evident reference to Zacchaeus as a sinner coming both from the crowd (which does not know of

anything given so far to the poor or about any restitution), and also from Zacchaeus' own admission of wrong doing. Moreover, the allusion to Zacchaeus as the "lost" one whom Jesus has come to seek and save is similar to those in chapter 15 in which the lost ones are named "sinners". (2) The fact that he is a toll collector links with characteristics offered in similar stories in Luke, in which toll collectors are receptive to the message of the Kingdom, which brings about a change in their lives after their encounter with Jesus. (3) Zacchaeus' repentance becomes evident from the way Luke elaborates the argument, for when Zacchaeus accepts fellowship with Jesus, who personalises the Kingdom of God, it implies sharing fellowship in the Kingdom of God. (4) Table-fellowship and joy are two elements which are related in Luke to both the granting of forgiveness and the receiving of salvation. (5) The role played by Jesus' words is also crucial for the interpretation of the salvation story. He "must" do what he has "come for", namely, to bring "salvation" to the "lost", in this case Zacchaeus, something which is taking place "today". (6) Luke links being children of Abraham with deeds indicative of repentance. (7) The crowd is wrong, not about who Zacchaeus is (a sinner) but about the mission of Jesus. (8) Thus it can be seen that both δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι should be interpreted as future tenses, as the result of Zacchaeus' repentance. He decides at that moment that he is going to give half of his possessions to the poor and pay fourfold to those he has deceived.

He is not thinking about future deceptions!

Therefore, the reading of the story of Zacchaeus as a story of vindication can be dismissed as unsatisfactory. It is mainly based on the interpretation of δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι as already happening actions, which conflicts with a natural reading of the text but most importantly, overlooks the main emphases in the pericope related to Luke's theological position throughout the third gospel.

In contrast to the vindication theory, the study of the story of Zacchaeus as a conversion account has made relevant a certain number of emphases which show a reasonable consistency with those present in other conversion stories. Thus, divine initiative has been displayed in Jesus' seeing and invitation to Zacchaeus (19:5) who is depicted in the story as both sinner (19:7) and lost (19:10). Such an initiative becomes concrete in Jesus' fellowship with Zacchaeus at his house (19:6), which provokes the conflict with the crowd who, in criticising Jesus' attitude, show their misunderstanding of his ministry (19:7). In consonance with the expected response to God's initiative and salvation brought by Jesus, Zacchaeus acknowledges his wrong doing and makes fourfold restitution of monies got by deception in the past and gives half of his possessions to the poor (19:8). According to Luke, this is to be understood as Zacchaeus' repentance made evident through a right attitude towards possessions and to the poor (19:8). Before that, Zacchaeus has joyfully received Jesus into his home. Both joy and hospitality/table-fellowship follow (in Luke) the reception of salvation (19:6). As a consequence of this fellowship, the roles depicted in the story are reversed. On the one hand, the crowd, which did not allow Zacchaeus to see, is not able to see

who Jesus is and what is the scope of his ministry so that they do not enter into his fellowship. On the other hand, Zacchaeus is welcomed by Jesus and is accepted in his company. The emphasis on Jesus as saviour here is also evident. He must come today to Zacchaeus' house (19:5) and it is today that salvation has come to his house (19:9). Finally, Jesus summarises the terms of the encounter as resulting from the Son of Man's seeking out and finding the lost.

8. THE CONVERSION OF THE CRIMINAL (Luke 23:39-43)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The story of the conversion of a criminal on the cross is the last of the Lukan conversion narratives during the earthly ministry of Jesus. It is an account unique to Luke's story of the crucifixion, for the other gospels only mention that together with Jesus two others are also crucified (cf. Matt 27:38; Mark 15:27-28; John 19:18). The references in the other gospels to the fact that the two other men on the cross with Jesus mock him (cf. Matt 27:44; Mark 15:32) or that the soldiers broke their legs to hasten their deaths so that they will not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (cf. John 19:32) play a secondary role in the accounts given. However, in the dialogue between Jesus and the two men also crucified with him, Luke reflects a unique tradition to his Gospel, with an emphasis on conversion.[1] This has already been the case with previous conversion stories in the third gospel, in which the accounts have no parallel in the other gospels or show redactional variations depicting Luke's theological emphasis.[2]

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[1] Rengstorf refers to Jewish sources on similar dialogues between those undergoing execution: "Dass Gekreuzigte noch miteinander oder mit Zeugen ihrer Qualen sprachen, berichten die jüdischen Quellen öfter" (Lukas [1968] 262). However, he does not provide any reference to which Jewish sources these are in order to substantiate his claim.

[2] Thus, the preaching of John the Baptist includes responses to the preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, such as, "What shall we do?" (3:10, 12, 14); the story of the conversion of Levi shows the Lukan emphasis on repentance as central to Jesus' ministry (5:32). Other Lukan conversion accounts find no parallel in the other gospels (7:36-50; 15:11-32; 19:1-10).

The story of the interaction between Jesus and the two criminals on the cross fits Luke's theological emphasis to the point that many scholars have taken it as a Lukan creation.[3] However, traces of Lukan redaction are scant,[4] namely, the qualifying of the two others with Jesus on the cross as "criminals" (κακούργων); the fact that the three are "hung" (τῶν κρεμασθέντων); the septuagintalism ἀποκριθείς... ἔφη (23:40) and the use of μὲν... δέ (23:41).[5] Furthermore, Marshall argues that even when the account shows Luke's style, there are many Palestinian characteristics that indicate Luke was not inventing the story.[6] More likely, the story should be taken as coming from Luke's own source material.[7] From a form-critical point of view, the story is a pronouncement story.[8]

With regard to the synoptic versions of the crucifixion, Luke omits the references both in Mark and Matthew about the Hebrew name "Golgotha" for the place in which Jesus will be crucified (Mark 15:22; Matt 27:33) and about the drink

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[3] Bultmann, History (1963) 306-7; Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (1971) 204; Klostermann, Das Lukasevangelium (1929) 225; Easton, St Luke (1926) 350-1. There is also Derrett's attempt to see in the account of the cross a reworking of the story of Joseph when he was in prison in Egypt together with Pharaoh's chief butler and baker (Gen 40) ("Two Malefactors," [1982] 200-14), a possibility that Nolland labels as "fortuitous" (Luke WBC [1993B] 1151).

[4] Jeremias, Sprache (1980) 306-7.

[5] On Luke's language and style see, Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 107-27.

[6] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 871.

[7] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1507; Rengstorf, Lukas (1968) 261-2; Creed, St Luke (1930) 285. Plummer considers three possible explanations to the riddle: (1) The Markan and Matthean versions reflect the events of the first hour on the cross, in which the two criminals mocked Jesus; but under the influence of what one of them may have heard Jesus preach in Galilee, he changes his attitude towards Jesus. (2) While both robbers criticise Jesus for not helping in their revolt to make changes in society, it is only one who "*railed upon*" him. (3) Mark and Mathew treat λῃσταί as a class to which the reviling of just one of them could be attributed. These evangelists did not know about the repentance of the criminal, which Luke got from his own source (Plummer, Luke ICC [1896] 533-4). Bock finds probable a combination of the first and third options (Luke BECNT 3B [1994] 1855).

[8] Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1507; *contra*, Taylor, Formation (1949) 56.

offered to Jesus (Mark 15:23; Matt 27:34). Jesus is said to be crucified together with two other people, who for Luke are criminals (κακούργων, 23:33) instead of thieves (λῃστάς, Mark 15:27; Matt 27:38). There is in Mark a reference to the hour of the crucifixion, "the third hour", (15:25) absent both in Matthew and Luke. The words of Jesus forgiving those who have just crucified him and cast lots for his garments appear only in the Lukan account (23:34), which reflects the evangelist interest in forgiveness. The role of the crowd is also different in Luke. They do not participate in the mocking of Jesus, reproaching him for his saying about the destruction of the temple and asking him to save himself (Mark 15:29-30; Matt 27:39-40). Rather, they stand and watch (23:35). Both in Mark and Matthew, the elders and rulers also deride Jesus and ask him to come down from the cross, if he is the king of Israel (Mark 15:31-32; Matt 27:41-43). In Luke, the demand is to save himself, if he is the Christ of God (23:35).

All three synoptics mention that at the sixth hour darkness came over the land from noon till three in the afternoon (Mark 15:33; Matt 27:45; Luke 23:44). To this, Luke adds both that this happened because the sun's light failed and that the curtain of the temple was torn in two (23:38). This reference to the curtain is also present in Mark and Matthew but as something happening as a result of Jesus' death (Mark 15:38; Matt 27:51). Matthew even mentions an earthquake and the coming out of the tomb of many "of the saints" (Matt 27:51-53). Mark and Matthew include a cry of Jesus that was misunderstood by bystanders as a call to Elijah, which they say happened at the ninth hour and after which Jesus cried

again and died (Mark 15:34-35; Matt 27:46-47). Luke also mentions this last cry with the inclusion of Jesus' last words "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" (23:46). The reaction of the centurion, according to Mark and Matthew, is to confess Jesus as Son of God (Mark 15:39; Matt 27:54), while Luke has the centurion praising God and declaring Jesus' innocence while the crowd leave the place beating their breasts (Luke 23:47-48). The final reference in the crucifixion account is to some of the disciples of Jesus who in Mark and Matthew seem to be only women (Mark 15:40-41; Matt 27:55-56) whilst in Luke, together with the women, there were other "acquaintances" of Jesus (23:49). Also significant for the present chapter is the fact that, although both Mark and Matthew mention the mockery of Jesus on the cross, in their accounts it comes from the two men also crucified with him but there is no mention of the following dialogue between Jesus and the criminals as found in Luke.

The analysis of the section will be divided in four sections: (1) the questioning of Jesus' character as both Messiah and saviour called into question by one of the criminals on the cross; (2) the reproach for deriding Jesus by the second criminal on the cross (23:40-41); (3) the petition made to Jesus by the penitent criminal (23:42); (4) how Jesus responds to the petition of the criminal by granting him salvation (23:43).

8.2 THE SAVING MESSIAH? (23:39)

The Lukan version of the episode on the cross includes the unique dialogue between Jesus and the two men also crucified with him. All four evangelists agree on the short reference to the fact that two other men are also put to death with Jesus, one on either side and Jesus between them (Mark 15:27; Matt 27:38; Luke 23:33; John 19:18). For Mark and Matthew the two men are robbers and John does not refer to their condition, while for Luke they are "criminals". The term used here is κακοῦργος.[9] The reference goes back to Jesus' own words that he would be counted among the transgressors (22:37) in fulfilment of the words of Isaiah "he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors" (53:12). Luke's underlying theological emphasis is that of the suffering Messiah. Jesus' death fits into God's redemptive programme, namely, that the Messiah must suffer in order to bring release. In John's gospel no mention is found, unlike in Mark or Matthew, that these two men mocked Jesus.[10] In Luke's unique version of the story, only one of the two hanged[11] criminals derides Jesus, while the other comes to his defence. Furthermore, in Mark 15:32 the challenge comes from the Jewish religious leadership who mock Jesus among themselves and cynically name him the Messiah, the King of Israel, calling upon him to come down from the cross and then they would believe.

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[9] Grundmann, "κακοῦργος," TDNT 3.484.

[10] Mark 15:32; Matt 27:44.

[11] Luke refers to the manner of execution as hanging (κρεμάννυμι) which according to different texts could either be on a tree or a cross (cf. Gen 40:19; Deut 21:22-23; Josh 8:29; Esth 8:7; Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal 3:13. See Bertram, "κρεμάννυμι," [1965] 915-21). On the Jewish resistance to accept one who has been crucified as Messiah in light of Deut 21:22-23, see Wilcox, "'Upon the Tree'," (1977) 85-99.

The second criminal joins the rulers and the soldiers in their mocking of Jesus. Such an attitude towards Jesus reflects the consistent rejection of him and his ministry by the leaders of the people. In the different conversion stories, it has been a consistent characteristic to have Jesus facing the opposition of the Pharisees and scribes, although in Luke the Pharisees are not involved in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Nonetheless, the Jerusalem religious leaders, scribes included, show a hostile attitude. Thus, Jesus' fellowship with Levi, which signals the salvation granted, is opposed by Pharisees and scribes (5:30); the Pharisee hosting Jesus criticises him for offering forgiveness to a woman of the city known to be a sinner (7:39, 49); Jesus' welcoming of and table fellowship with toll collectors and sinners are reproved by the Pharisees and scribes to which Jesus replies with the three parables of the "Lost and Found" (15:2); even at the account of the conversion of Zacchaeus, in which the Pharisees and scribes are not mentioned, the opposition to Jesus' welcoming and granting of salvation to Zacchaeus resembles the hostility previously shown by these two religious groups to Jesus' ministry (19:7). The conflict and rejection of the ministry of Jesus by the Pharisees and scribes is summarised by Luke as their rejection of "the purpose of God for themselves"(7:30).

In all three instances the criticism is of Jesus as saviour and Christ: "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One" (23:35); "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" (23:37); "Are you not the

Christ? Save yourselves and us!" (23:39).[12] Even in these cynical utterances the identity of Jesus is revealed. The irony of the situation is that the alleged failure of Jesus ends up being that of those mocking him, as Jesus is able to grant salvation while they are unable to receive it.[13] The conditional question posed to Jesus by the first criminal presumes a negative answer, not because of Jesus' identity but based on the misunderstanding of the questioner. The first criminal does not see Jesus as the Messiah, as the reproach of the other criminal will make clear. Luke uses the term βλασφημέω instead of the Markan ὀνειδίζω to describe the derision.[14] The mocking of Jesus is interpreted as blasphemy for it implies a refusal to acknowledge his saving power.[15]

Throughout his gospel, Luke has consistently presented Jesus' identity both as saviour and Messiah. It was the announcement of the angel to the shepherds: that this day a Saviour, who is the Messiah, has been born (2:11). In his prophetic words after the birth of his son John, Zechariah blesses God for sending (in reference to Jesus) salvation to his people (1:69, 71). After Simeon receives the promise that he would not see death before seeing the Lord's Messiah (2:26),

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[12] Talbert sees in the triple criticism of Jesus a resemblance of the three temptations of Jesus in the desert (4:1-13) where he is challenged, "if you are the Son of God" (Reading Luke [1988] 220; cf. Brown, Death of the Messiah [1994] 1003). The petition of the one on the cross "Save us" corresponds to his situation (Johnson, Luke SP [1991] 387).

[13] Johnson reflects the irony in the fact that Jesus not only forgives the repentant criminal on the cross but even extends his forgiveness to his own executioners (23:34), who are depicted as unable to receive it, as their mocking of Jesus for not being able to save himself shows (Luke SP [1991] 380). For Green, the irony is in the fact that Jesus' identity as king and Messiah is sealed on the cross as the result of God's plan (Luke NICNT [1997] 819).

[14] Beyer, "βλασφημία," TDNT 1.623.

[15] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 871. He takes the word as a Christian indictment based on who Jesus is (cf. Beyer, "βλασφημία," TDNT 1.623). Bock defines blasphemy as "denigration of God's character, insulting God's presence, insulting his people, or acting against them" ("Son of Man," [1994] 184).

when the child Jesus is brought to him in the temple he praises God for having seen his salvation (2:30). The ministry of John the Baptist is unfolded in terms of the salvation of God's Messiah displayed in the ministry of Jesus. John is his forerunner (3:6). To the astonishment of his host and other guests, Jesus grants to the woman of the city salvation after forgiving her sins (7:50). Once more, Jesus' authority as God's anointed one is displayed when he declares that salvation has come to Zacchaeus' house (19:9-10). The mocking of Jesus on the cross is based on his questioned role as both Messiah and saviour (23:35, 39). The risen Christ explains to the disciples on the road to Emmaus that it was necessary that the Messiah should suffer so that salvation could be proclaimed (24:46). This is also the case in the present account of the dialogue between Jesus and the criminal on the cross. Because of Jesus' messianic character, the repentant criminal asks Jesus to grant him salvation (23:42-43). [16]

It has often been the case that scholars have tried to interpret Luke's theology of the cross from a Pauline understanding of the same. From that perspective, the

[16] On Salvation in Luke-Acts, see the different articles on the issue included in Marshall and Peterson, Witness to the Gospel (1998) 41-166; also, Green, Theology (1995); Powell, "Salvation," (1992) 5-10; Aguirre-Monasterio and Rodríguez-Carmona, Sinópticos y Hechos (1992) 331-41; Green, "Death of Jesus," (1990) 1-28, 170-3; *idem*, "Message of Salvation," (1989) 21-34; Marshall, Historian and Theologian (1988[3]); Radl, Lukas (1988) 105-11; Bovon, "Das Heil," (1985) 61-74; O'Toole, Unity of Luke's Theology (1984); Marshall, "Luke and His Gospel," (1983) 289-308; Giles, "Salvation," (1983) 10-6, 45-9; Maddox, Purpose of Luke Acts (1982); Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1981) 22-3, 219-31; Duppont, Salvation of the Gentiles (1979); Dömer, Das Heil Gottes (1978); Flanagan, "What and How of Salvation," (1979) 203-13; Ford, "Reconciliation and Forgiveness," (1978) 80-98; George, "Vocabulaire de salut," (1978) 307-20; Mangatt, "Gospel of Salvation," (1976) 60-80; Martin, "Salvation and Discipleship," (1976) 366-80; Glöckner, Die Verkündigung des Heils (1975); Throckmorton, "Σῴζειν," (1973) 516-26; Pilgrim, "Death of Christ," (1971); Menoud, "Le salut par la foi," (1970) 255-76; Zehnle, "Salvific Character," (1969) 420-44; Flender, St. Luke (1967); Conzelmann, Theology of St Luke (1960).

conclusion is undisputed; Luke does not have such a theology of the cross.[17] This so-called "omission" has led some scholars to find alternative ways of interpreting the death of Jesus in Luke in terms of "martyrdom"[18] or of Jesus as the "new Adam".[19] However, the cross is not without soteriological significance in Luke. In the context of the Last Supper (22:19-20), Jesus breaks the bread and says to his disciples that it represents his body given for them;[20] and the cup poured out for them symbolizes the new covenant established with Jesus' blood.[21] Nevertheless, Luke does not give the same prominence to the interpretation of Jesus' death as conveying salvation as he does to the figure of the suffering Messiah.

Concerning the connection between Jesus' death and the idea of the suffering Messiah there is virtually no reference in Jewish literature to it, perhaps just some

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[17] Green, "Message of Salvation," (1989) 23; Tyson, Death of Jesus (1986) 170; Kasemann, New Testament Questions (1969) 22; Wilckens, Missionsreden (1963^2) 127; Conzelmann, Theology of St Luke (1960) 201; Kiddle, "Passion Narrative," (1935) 267-80.

[18] In the context of the emphasis on the suffering Messiah, the death of Jesus is interpreted as the death of an innocent martyr who, thus, becomes a model of faith. See, Karris, Artist and Theologian (1985); Beck, "*Imitatio Christi*," (1981) 28-47; Pilgrim, "The Death of Christ," (1971).

[19] This position emphasises the fact that Jesus, as the beginner of a new period in history does away with the sinful consequences of the first Adam. Access to paradise, closed to Adam because of his sin, is now (re)opened in Jesus. See, Neyrey, Passion (1985) 165-84.

[20] Nolland has noticed that the full meaning of Jesus' words at the breaking of the bread rests on the interpretation of "given for you" for they relate his body and approaching death. He goes on to mention Thucydides, *History* 2.43.2 and Libanus, *Declam.* 24.3, where "'give one's own body' is an image of dying in battle for the sake of one's own people" (Luke WBC [1993B] 1054).

[21] In the first covenant between Yahweh and Israel, the sacrificial blood was interpreted as establishing the covenant between them (Exod 24:8). The reference to the new covenant echoes Jer 31:31 where Yahweh promises a new covenant for Israel and Judah. Cf. Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 1727; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1402; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 806; Goppelt, "ποτήριον," TDNT 6.155 n.70; Caird, Luke (1963) 238; Creed, St Luke (1930) 265. Green also notices that the symbol of the cup in the Old Testament relates to both salvation (Ps 116:13) and judgement (Ps 75:8) (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 762).

parallelisms from Psalms of lament over the suffering of the innocent.[22] There is no reference to it in any of the other New Testament writings either. However, Luke emphasises the suffering of the Messiah as a divine necessity, "was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things?" (24:26).[23] Actually, before this reference in chapter 24 to the necessary suffering of the Messiah,[24] Luke has referred to the suffering of the Son of God (cf. 9:22, 44; 17:25; 18:31-34; 22:22) and of the prophets (cf. 4:24; 13:33-34). Green argues, as a possible explanation for this shift towards a suffering Messiah, the Lukan correlation between the fate of the prophet, destined to rejection and suffering (cf. Judg 2:11-16; 2 Chr 36:16; Neh 9:26; Luke 4:24; 6:23; 11:47-51; 13:33-34; Acts 7:52), and messiahship. This association between prophet and Messiah results in the eschatological suffering of the Messiah before his glorification.[25] This pattern of reversal from the suffering on the cross to the vindication by God reveals the divine necessity for the cross.[26] It is in the divine vindication of Jesus that follows the cross that

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[22] Pss 22; 31; 69; 118; Is 53. See, Green, Theology (1995) 64; Brown, Death of the Messiah (1994) 1453-5: Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 1938; Danker, Jesus and the New Age (1988) 393; Bock, Proclamation (1987) 144-8; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1565-6; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 896. It is relevant to mention that Green finds the image of the "Suffering Servant" and not that of the "Suffering Righteous" more fitting to "explain the *divine necessity* of the cross in salvation-historical terms" ("Death of Jesus," [1992] 161).

[23] See, Green, "Death of Jesus," (1992) 146-63, esp. 161, where he argues that the connection between the "Suffering Servant" and Jesus' suffering shows the "salvation-historical necessity of the cross *and* spotlights Jesus' exaltation or vindication as the salvific event".

[24] Other Lukan references to the suffering of the Messiah are, 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23.

[25] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 848-9. Cf. Strauss, Davidic Messiah (1995) 257.

[26] The necessity of the cross in Luke makes "Luke's presentation of the crucifixion of Jesus... the very centrepiece of the plan of God" (Squires Plan [1993] 57; cf. Acts 2:23; 4:28) whereas Peter refers to the crucifixion as "according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God" so that, according to Luke, even those who killed Jesus became instruments of that divine plan (also, Neyrey, Passion [1985] 141). Fitzmyer asks the question "whether the God is portrayed in it [the Lukan story] bringing to realization his salvific plan *despite* the suffering and the death of Jesus or *through* that suffering and death" and adds "In my opinion, it is the latter" (Luke the Theologian [1989] 212).

salvation is possible.[27] It is in anticipation of that glorious vindication[28] that the repentant criminal is promised that he will share Jesus' own destiny. For Luke, the effect of the cross is salvation.

It is within this theological emphasis that Luke interprets the mocking of rulers, soldiers and even of one of the criminals on the cross.[29] They cannot accept the idea of a suffering Messiah. However, as will be shown below, there are those who are able to acknowledge Jesus' messianic role even at the time of suffering on the cross. This becomes one of the instances in which the prophecy about Jesus and the division of the people of Israel for his sake becomes especially poignant. On the one hand, those rejecting Jesus because of his messianic claim have taken him to the cross, while, on the other hand, those open to acknowledge Jesus' messianic character come to faith in Jesus as God's messiah even on the cross.

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[27] Longenecker remarks that it is in Jesus' attitude of obedience to God's will that he should go to the cross that Luke emphasises discipleship as taking the cross *daily* ("Taking Up the Cross Daily," [1996] 69-70).

[28] It is important to notice that in contrast with other vindication references found in the Psalms and intertestamental literature, in which the suffering one not only calls for his restoration but also for the damnation of his tormentors (Ps 35:22-26; 2 Macc 7), Jesus asks God for their forgiveness (23:34). See, Green, Death of Jesus (1988) 317.

[29] The mockery of the soldiers is unique to Luke's account. Brown argues that it is a Lukan creation to keep the parallelism with the threefold mocking of Jesus found also in the other Synoptics (Death of the Messiah [1994] 990). The crowds are passively depicted as standing by, "watching" (23:35). This is consistent with Luke's generally positive portrayal of the people (Green, Death of Jesus [1988] 301) who will later accept the apostolic preaching of Jesus (Brown, Death of the Messiah [1994] 989. Cf. Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 6:1).

8.3 ACKNOWLEDGING SIN (23:40-41)

The second criminal responds to the words of the first and reproaches his impious attitude towards God.[30] He reckons that the punishment they, the two criminals, are receiving[31] is just,[32] in contrast to the situation of Jesus who has been deemed innocent by Herod (23:15), Pilate (23:14, 20, 22), and later by the centurion (23:47). In line with Luke's theological emphasis, it is relevant to the story that it is a criminal, a social destitute, an outsider from both the main social and religious spheres, who acknowledges Jesus not only as innocent but also as God's envoy. Such is the case in other conversion stories, in which those condemned as sinners by the socio-religious establishment are the ones to acknowledge Jesus' ministry and character, while the socio-religious leaders not only failed to recognise Jesus' divine character but also opposed his ministry. Thus, the sinful woman acknowledges Jesus' prophetic character while Simon the Pharisee criticises Jesus and censures his granting of forgiveness to the woman (7:36-50). While the toll collectors and sinners gather around Jesus to hear him, the Pharisees and the scribes censure his welcoming attitude towards them (15:1-32). Zacchaeus joyfully offers Jesus hospitality, which provokes the

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[30] In the *Magnificat* (1:50) the promise of God's mercy is granted to those who fear him. There are other instances in Luke in which the formula "fear of God" is used. Thus, it is a way to depict the righteous person (cf. 1:50). It is also the attitude of the person who is not concerned about God's judgement (2:2, 4; 23:40; cf. Josephus' *A.J.* 10.83). In the book of Revelation the link is found between the fear of God and the eschatological judgement (cf. Rev 11:18; 14:7; 15:4; 19:5). See, Balz, "φοβέω," TDNT 9.189-219.

[31] Marshall asserts that the term ἀπολαμβάνω comes from Luke's own source (Luke NIGTC [1978] 872).

[32] This acknowledgement by one of the criminals that he and the other criminal are undergoing a just punishment for their actions makes more remote the possibility that those on the cross with Jesus held Zealot views, as Marshall seems open to concede (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 871; cf. Nolland, Luke WBC [1993A] 1151). It is the only time in Luke that the term δικαίως appears.

disapproving murmuring of the crowd (19:1-10). In the story of the crucifixion, religious leaders and soldiers mock Jesus, deriding his messianic claim yet a criminal on the cross recognises Jesus messianic character and salvific power.

The use of οὐδέ links the attitude of the first criminal to that of those also mocking Jesus. The rebuke is not only a criticism of the deriding of Jesus by the first criminal, in the same way that the religious leaders and soldiers had done before, but it is also a criticism of the attitude before the imminent judgement of God of those who were going soon to die.[33] Johnson sees this idea of judgement present in the context by means of the twofold interpretation of the word κρίμα, namely, as "sentence" and "judgement". The former reflects the death sentence they have received and the latter reflects God's judgement to be faced after death.[34]

There is an acknowledgement of guilt by one of the men on the cross, which in his case amounts to a confession of sin leading to repentance,[35] together with a recognition of Jesus' innocence, as the following petition will show. Brown denies any trace of repentance in the second criminal. He only sees Jesus' great

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[33] In the second century apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* (4:10-13), there is a reference to a rebuke from one of the criminals on the cross. The reproach is a reaction to the division and casting of lots over Jesus' clothes and it includes an acknowledgement of the just suffering of the criminals, the saving character of Jesus, and his innocence (see, Hennecke, Apocrypha 1 [1963] 184). There is however the dispute whether the Gospel of Peter reflects a pre-Lukan tradition or whether it is dependent on the canonical tradition. The former position would then convey that Luke could have drawn from this earlier tradition together with Mark to write his own account, but this is much too uncertain to make such a claim (cf. Brown, Death of the Messiah [1994] 1001-2).

[34] Johnson, Luke SP (1991) 378. Therefore, Johnson can conclude that the reference to fearing God is appropriate in light of the coming judgement of God.

[35] Fitzmyer speaks of an implicit expression of repentance (Luke the Theologian [1989] 207).

forgiveness, as in the case of the healing of the ear of the servant of the high priest, an enemy of Jesus (22:50-51). Jesus is manifesting his forgiveness for those crucified with him.[36] Brown's argument is also questionable from its own premise. If what can be inferred from the dialogue between Jesus and criminals on the cross is only Jesus' grace towards his enemy, why show it to only one of the two criminals who happen to be in an identical situation, and why choose the one who has shown himself to be less of an enemy to Jesus? The narrative does not support Brown's position, for both Jesus' saving grace and people's repentance as a way of showing their acceptance of him and his grace go hand in hand in Luke, among other things, as a way to show the contrast between those who accept Jesus, and consequently repent, and those who do not. According to Luke, divine initiative expects an answer, which the different conflicts between Jesus and the leaders of the people prove is not always a positive one. Such an opposition to the ministry of Jesus is seen as a rejection (ἀθετέω) of God's plan (cf. 7:30). Forgiveness is available but not granted.

In some of the other conversion stories previously studied, it has been shown that repentance is evidenced by the actions of the repentant individuals, in line with the Lukan emphasis on the concrete, "outwardly", attestation of repentance in the life of the penitent. Thus, Levi gives up those activities that bring him the label "sinner" and follows Jesus (5:27-28). The positive actions of the woman of the city towards Jesus contrast with those missing from Simon the Pharisee. Her

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[36] Brown, Death of the Messiah (1994) 1004-5.

actions are taken as a sign of her repentance and therefore her sins are forgiven, while Simon remains hostile to Jesus (7:37-38, 47-48). Zacchaeus gives proof of his contrition in his giving of half of his goods to the poor, and his fourfold restoration of any possible fraud (19:8). Jesus himself acknowledges such actions as the repentance expected as the result of his ministry (5:32; 15:7, 10). Accordingly, the acknowledgement of his own wrong doing, the acceptance of his punishment as "just", and the favourable disposition of the second criminal on the cross towards Jesus are distinct manifestations of his repentance.

8.4 THE PETITION (23:42)

The reproach of the second criminal because of the words of the first one[37] leads into a direct address to Jesus, who is called by his name,[38] a fact that could have some significance in connecting this account with other conversion stories in Luke. If as Brown argues, his calling Jesus "is stunning in its intimacy",[39] it could be contended that Luke is building up a favourable presentation of the second criminal in contrast with the first. It is only those Jesus welcomes and forgives that share in his fellowship. That is the case of the conversion stories of

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[37] Nolland affirms that the words marking the transition from the first criminal's addressing Jesus καὶ ἔλεγεν, are unlikely to be Lukan. He concludes this based on the Lukan removal of these words whenever he finds them in his Markan source, except for 6:5 (Luke WBC [1993B] 1151).

[38] In some manuscripts Jesus is addressed "Lord" which Rehkopf considers a pre-Lukan expression (Sonderquelle [1959] 98-9). However, the present reading is supported by p^{75} ℵ B C L. Evans notices that it is one of the rare occasions in the gospels in which Jesus is addressed by his name and the only one in which the name is not accompanied by any other identifying or qualifying term, such as "Jesus of Nazareth" (4:34); "Jesus Son of the Most High God" (8:26); "Jesus, Master" (17:13); "Jesus, son of David" (18:38); (Luke [1990] 873).

[39] Brown, Death of the Messiah (1994) 1005. He links the direct address to Jesus to the sincerity of the request.

both Levi and Zacchaeus who receive Jesus in their respective houses after he has accepted them. The encounter takes places as an expression of repentance and forgiveness (cf. 5:29; 19:5-7). In the story of the sinful woman, although she is not even a guest, her actions towards Jesus show a level of intimacy with him that puts the actual host to shame (7:44-46).

The petition of the criminal is that Jesus would remember him in his eschatological return. The tone of the criminal's petition implies the recognition of a fate different to that of Jesus, which together with the absence of any appeal to merits on the side of the repentant criminal, calls for a graceful divine intervention. The criminal appeals to Jesus' divine grace for himself.

The term μιμνῄσκομαι implies "to remember for good"[40] or "be graciously mindful of me".[41] The petition recalls Old Testament references to God's blessings springing from his remembering of his covenant with his people or servant (cf. Gen 9:15; Lev 26:45; 1 Sam 1:11; Ps 106:4; Jer 15:15).[42] However, "remember" here is not just a thing of the past or a "historical recollection" but a question of identity. Forgetfulness becomes a threat to identity (cf. Deut 8:11, 19). In remembering the covenant "God establishes an identity and is faithful to it, determines a cause, and acts in accordance with it",[43] and so in accordance

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[40] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 872.

[41] Jeremias, "παράδεισος," TDNT 5.770.

[42] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 822.

[43] Verhey, "Remember, Remembrance," (1992) 667.

with the promises given to the children of Israel, God remembers them and consequently blesses them (cf. Ps 115:12). In the Lukan infancy narrative, the link between God's remembering and salvation is evidenced. Thus, in the Magnificat Mary rejoices in God her saviour (ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρί μου, 1:47) for he has favoured the lowly and the powerless, and has shown compassion to them, "in remembrance of his mercy" (μνησθῆναι ἐλέους, 1:54) according to the promises made to Abraham (1:46-55). Likewise, in his prophetic words, Zechariah blesses God who has visited his people and raised a mighty saviour (ἤγειρεν κέρας σωτηρίας, 1:69) who will deliver them from their enemies according to the covenant sworn to Abraham (μνησθῆναι διαθήκης ἁγίας αὐτοῦ, 1:72-73). Memory then is not just a recollection of the past but the activity of God on behalf of people. This accord with Luke's emphasis on divine initiative that reverses established values in society by showing mercy towards the poor, the sinner and the lost.

According to Marshall the use of ἔρχομαι in the petition of the criminal reflects a Semitic idiom meaning "to come again".[44] The idea dwells on the conviction of Jesus' eschatological return. The question is whether the expectation is of Jesus' return in his kingdom[45] or as a king.[46] The first reading is considered closer to Luke's theology even if it is the result of a possible scribal correction.[47] The

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[44] (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 872; also, Jeremias, "παράδεισος," TDNT 5.770).

[45] Supported by p^{75} B L it vg Or Hil,

[46] Supported by ℵ A Ć W Γ Δ Θ f1 f13 pl sy sa bo.

[47] Metzger, Textual Commentary (1994^2) 154.

second reading echoes a Semitism, meaning "as a king". Marshall attributes to a misreading in spatial terms of this second possibility the exchange of εἰς for ἐν.[48] For him the second reading is to be preferred. The criminal is asking Jesus to remember him in his eschatological kingly return. "The criminal thus regards Jesus as more than a martyr; he implicitly confesses his faith that Jesus is the Messiah or Son of man".[49] This second reading seems to accord best with the situation, since the inscription over his cross reads that Jesus is crucified as the king of the Jews, an expectation that found an echo in the second criminal on the cross.[50] Danker speaks of the kingly status of Jesus in relation to the criminal's petition saying that "executive pardon is a king's privilege, and this malefactor becomes the beneficiary of Jesus' first public act on the day of his coronation".[51]

8.5 THE GRANTING OF SALVATION (23:43)

Jesus' positively emphatic answer, ἀμήν,[52] grants the man his request, for he will be in paradise with him that very day. Once more, the power of Jesus' word becomes a Lukan way of asserting Jesus' authority.[53] As in the story of the

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[48] Also, Jeremias, "παράδεισος," (1967) 770; *idem*, Eucharistic Words, (1966²) 249 n.2.

[49] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 872.

[50] Bock, Luke BECNT 3B (1994) 1856.

[51] Danker, Luke (1987²) 79. Leaney makes the motif of Jesus as king central to Luke's theology (St. Luke [1958] 34-7).

[52] It is a term used before a declaration by Jesus to make it more conclusive. The other occurrences in Luke are, 4:24; 12:37; 18:17, 29; 21:32; 23:43. See, Strugnell, "'Amen I Say'," (1974) 177-90; Berger, Die Amen-Worte Jesu (1970); Hasler, Amen (1969); Jeremias, Prayers (1967) 112-5; O'Neill, "Six Amen," (1951) 1-9; Schlier, "ἀμήν," (1964) 335-8.

[53] Cf. 4:32, 36, where the authority of Jesus' word is established at the outset of his public ministry. See, Richard, New Views (1990) 111; Nolland, Luke WBC (1989) 359.

woman of the city, Jesus grants her the forgiveness of her sins, even to the astonishment and rejection of his host, Simon the Pharisee, and other guests who consider the action blasphemous (7:46-50). Likewise, in the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus, salvation is granted to him by Jesus' authoritative word (19:9-10). On the cross, Jesus is asserting his own authority, that which the rulers and the soldiers have defied with their mocking of his role as saviour. Nevertheless, the saving authority of Jesus becomes evident through his word. He grants salvation to the penitent criminal on the cross, Jesus tells him that today he will be in paradise "with me" (μετ' ἐμοῦ).[54]

It is in the infancy narratives that the divine salvific initiative in favour of the lowly and the powerless to be displayed in the ministry of Jesus is first disclosed in Luke. That divine initiative has been manifested in Jesus' welcoming and offering of forgiveness to those who like the toll collectors and sinners are despised by people of the upper socio-religious strata. Now, in a uniquely Lukan reference, even at the cross that same initiative is displayed in Jesus' request: "Father forgive them" (Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς, 23:34): Green underlines that the petition is in favour of both the Jews and the Romans.[55] This once more accords with Luke's emphasis on God's gracious plan but also sets the scene for the dialogue on the cross between Jesus and the criminals. Jesus' reference to people's ignorance may attenuate the charge against them but not their

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[54] Goppelt links the emphasis in the synoptics on fellowship with Jesus (formed by μετά and a genitive) with the eschatological fellowship promised (cf. Matt 8:11; Luke 22:29-30; 23:43) (Theology [1982] 98).

[55] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 819-20.

responsibility. They must repent to attain forgiveness.[56] On the cross, the first criminal defies Jesus while the second one shows his repentance and asks for forgiveness. To him Jesus promises that today he would be with him in paradise.

However, there are two basic questions about the meaning of the expression, namely: When does σήμερον take place and where is παράδεισος?[57] The temporal issue becomes a difficult one because of the earthly presence of Jesus after his death. Was he not to be in paradise together with the repentant criminal? Concerning paradise, since Jesus is still on earth after his death and "today" may not convey an imminent reality, is paradise an intermediary place? A solution to the conflict comes from Luke's own theological depicting of the resurrection. As Fitzmyer has represented at some length,[58] the conflict results from a harmonised reading of the different New Testament references to what happened to Jesus after his death. The Lukan emphasis is on Jesus' exaltation. In fact, in none of the gospels is there any reference to a witnessing of the resurrection itself, but to the risen Christ. In two references in Acts to God's raising of Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:32-33; 5:30-31) the divine action is identified with Jesus' exaltation. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus speaks to the disciples saying that what was written was that it was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26). According to the Lukan account, the resurrection

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[56] There are references in Acts linking people's rejection of Jesus (and even of his crucifixion) with their ignorance (cf. 3:17; 13:27; 17:30). They should respond with their repentance if they want to enjoy the anticipated forgiveness and salvation (cf. 3:19; 13:38-41; 17:30).

[57] Παράδεισος is a Lukan *hapax legomenon*. The other occurrences in the New Testament are found in 2 Cor 12:4 and Rev 2:7.

[58] Fitzmyer, Luke the Theologian (1989) 214-22.

becomes equivalent to the glorification of Jesus so that the risen Christ is the glorified Christ. From this perspective, the promise made to the repentant criminal is that he will enjoy God's glory immediately after his death. "Today" becomes quite a concrete temporal reality, in accordance with Luke's theology.

Luke has consistently used σήμερον not as a mere chronological term locating an event but linked with the presence and conferring of salvation. Thus the angel announced to the shepherds on the fields that it is today that a saviour, a Messiah, the Lord is born (2:11). At the synagogue in Nazareth Jesus reveals that in him today the promise of the coming of the year of the Lord has been fulfilled (4:21). After Jesus' healing of a paralysed man whose sin he forgives, thus asserting the authority of the Son of Man to do this, the people exclaim that today they have seen incredible things (5:26). Jesus' presence today at Zacchaeus' house (19:5) links with the following assertion that today salvation has come to that place (19:9). With the exception of the healing of the paralytic, all references are uniquely Lukan and in the account of the paralytic Luke changes the Markan reference to the people's saying "we have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:12) to "we have seen strange things today" (Luke 5:26). Therefore, σήμερον becomes a characteristic feature in Luke's theology to convey the idea that eschatological salvation is advanced and bestowed on the individual by the authority of Jesus' presence and word.

Once the Lukan understanding of "today" has been clarified, the possibility of suggesting an interpretation of "paradise" follows. Παράδεισος means "garden, paradise", from old Persian *paíri-dāeza*, and refers to the garden of Eden (Gen 2:8 [LXX]). It came to signify the future glory of God's people (Is 51:3). Yet, some scholars have emphasised the meaning of paradise as an intermediary stage for the souls of the righteous ones,[59] "the (post-resurrection) intermediate abode of the righteous (1 *Enoch* 37-70) or as the hidden eschatological place of the righteous (2 *Enoch* 8)".[60] There is also the reference to Abraham's bosom in 16:23, which those supporting the middle-state interpretation of paradise think provides the evidence for such an understanding in Luke. However, there is no clear indication that the verse should be interpreted in that way. It does not shed any more light on the use of paradise in Luke than Jesus' promise to the criminal. In fact, Abraham's bosom can be interpreted as a "position of intimacy and honor at the heavenly banquet (cf. 13:28)".[61] If the consistent Lukan use of "today" linked with the ministry of Jesus corresponds to the actual presence of salvation, then the promise of Jesus to the criminal on the cross is unmistakable, right after death he will enjoy the granted salvation.

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[59] Jeremias, "παράδεισος," TDNT 5.765-73.

[60] Charlesworth, "Paradise," (1992) 155.

[61] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 607. The emphasis on the intermediary dwelling does even raise the question of what is Jesus saying about his own situation after his death. Will he also be in that intermediate place?

Moreover, any attempt to affirm the meaning and location of paradise at work here[62] misses the main intention of Jesus' promise in which the term acquires its significance, namely, the guarantee and certainty of the salvation conferred by him to the repentant criminal. In christological terms, the emphasis is on Jesus as saving Messiah.[63] From the perspective of the repentant criminal, the death of Jesus certainly has soteriological significance for it is through his death that Jesus can take him in to paradise.

8.6 CONCLUSION

The present chapter concludes the Lukan presentation of conversion accounts during the earthly ministry of Jesus. He is taken to the cross, charged with claiming to be the Messiah, something the religious leaders took as blasphemous and as rebellious against the political *status quo*. On the cross, Jesus encounters two different attitudes towards him that exemplify the twofold reactions towards him and his ministry that accompanied Jesus during his life. On the one hand, the first criminal on the cross, alongside the leaders of the people and the soldiers, derides Jesus for his claim to be the Messiah while unable to save himself. They cannot accept the figure of a suffering Messiah. The refusal of the first criminal

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[62] There is no consistent use of "paradise" in Jewish literature that could help in suggesting a possible use by Luke. By way of illustration, according to T. Abr. 20:14 the bosom of Abraham and his descendants are in paradise while, at the same time, Abraham is said to be taken to paradise, which shows no consistent use of the concepts relating to life after death. See, Dupont, "Individuelle Eschatologie," (1973) 47, who denies the existence of any intermediate stage.

[63] Dupont, "Individuelle Eschatologie," (1973) 45; cf. Ellis, "Present and Future," (1965-6) 35-40. From a sociological point of view, Danker qualifies the Christological emphasis conveyed by the words of Jesus as free from "special social privilege, nationalistic claim, cultic patronage, and speculative dreams" (Luke [1987^2] 79).

to acknowledge Jesus' character and ministry results in his rejection. On the other hand, the second criminal depicts those socially despised in society; those who Jesus approaches and welcomes and those who acknowledge and accept him as God's Messiah. According to Luke's portrait of the crucifixion of Jesus, even on the cross, rejection and acceptance become poignant reflections of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

The study of the text has led to a disclosing of certain implicit theological emphases in Luke's theology that required clarification in order to proceed with the analysis of the narrative. Thus, the role of the cross in Luke's theology needed clarification in order to place the dialogue of Jesus and the two criminals in its wider context. The conclusion is that for Luke the effect of the cross is salvation. Also, the terms "today" and "paradise" required a precise definition in temporal and spatial terms, respectively.

Concerning the Lukan presentation of the account of the criminal on the cross as a conversion story, there are a series of elements that lead to such a conclusion. (1) The reality of God's initiative at work in the ministry of Jesus has been emphasized in the previous words of Jesus asking that God forgive those who are executing him. (2) The closer context of the present account is the mocking of Jesus in his identity as saviour and Messiah, an identity which is disputed and rejected by religious leaders and soldiers. In line with this attitude, one of the criminals on the cross joins in the deriding. This hostile attitude resembles that of

the religious and political leadership during Jesus' ministry. (3) The second criminal on the cross reproaches the scornful attitude of the first criminal for showing no fear of God. He goes on to affirm that both he and his fellow-criminal are "justly", condemned while Jesus is innocent. It has been shown that the attitude of the second criminal amounts to a confession of his sin and a manifestation of repentance. (4) The following request to Jesus by the second criminal is an appeal to God's divine grace at work in the ministry of Jesus. The petition is put in the conviction of the eschatological kingly character of Jesus. (5) The messianic and salvific authority of Jesus is displayed by his words of assurance to the repentant criminal. Certainly, he will be today in paradise. With his pronouncement, Jesus has granted salvation. He is the saving Messiah.

Thus, recurring elements in Luke's conversion stories have become evident in the account of the dialogue on the cross between Jesus and two criminals also crucified with him. The unparalleled character of the story in the synoptic tradition together with common elements such as conflict, sin, repentance, forgiveness, and the granting of salvation through Jesus' pronouncement, make the story of the interaction between Jesus and a criminal on the cross a typical Lukan account of a conversion. Through the story the evangelist emphasises the divine salvific activity that has been at work during the ministry of Jesus, namely, that he has come to "seek out and save the lost"(19:10), to "call sinners to repentance" (5:32) according to God's foreordained plan.

9. THE NON-CONVERSION OF A RULER (Luke 18:18-30)

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The six previous chapters of the present work deal with paradigms of conversion from a corresponding number of accounts from the third gospel. The aim of those chapters has been to disclose those characteristic elements common to the stories which may allow one to speak of an intentional pattern of conversion particular to the theology of Luke as displayed in the third gospel.

The account of the encounter between Jesus and a ruler (Luke 18:18-30),[1] with the following consequences and reactions, becomes the theory proof-text for the paradigm of conversion in Luke. The aim of the present chapter on the non-conversion of a Jewish ruler is to verify whether commonly occurring elements in the previously studied conversion stories in Luke are those also appearing in the account of the encounter between Jesus and a ruler. Given that the outcome of what can be anticipated as a conversion story turns out to be a negative one, a non-conversion, it should be expected that those already characteristic conversion elements in Luke would be portrayed as unsuccessful.

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[1] From a form critical point of view, the text is a pronouncement story, an apophthegm that Jesus pronounces in reply to the question of the ruler (Bock, Luke BECNT [1994] 1474; Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1985] 1197); Bultmann, History (1963) 21-2. Tannehill calls it a quest story for the ruler comes to Jesus in search of eternal life (Narrative Unity [1986] 111-27).

The story of the encounter between Jesus and the ruler appears in all three synoptic gospels (Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-30) and in this study of the Lukan version the different variations appearing in the third gospel will receive due attention. It should be noticed first, that in the previous story on the blessing of the children (18:15-17) Luke has gone back to Mark's ordering of the stories and, second, that there are very few changes from the Markan version of Jesus' encounter with the ruler. This contrasts with the other successful conversion accounts in the third gospel where they are either unique in the synoptics or with clear evidences of Luke's redactional work. However, the relevance of this present section lies in the contrast with other conversion stories in Luke. That is why constant comparisons will be traced with the preceding chapters to establish the relevance of those elements featured in Luke's theology of conversion.

In relation to its context in the gospel of Luke, the story of the rich ruler belongs to a group of accounts dealing with issues concerning the kingdom of God and how to respond to it (17:20-18:30). Thus, Jesus answers the question of the Pharisees about when the kingdom of God would come with the "already and not yet" reality of the same (17:20-37). The Pharisees are portrayed once more as failing "to perceive the realization of God's redemptive project before their eyes in the ministry of Jesus".[2] In the following parable of the persistent widow (18:1-8) Jesus praises the kind of faith that the widow shows, which he

[2] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 631.

encourages as the one to uphold at times of distress and eschatological expectation. With both the parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector (18:9-14) and the event with the children (18:15-17) Jesus identifies the kind of characters and attitudes that signal those who will enter the kingdom of God.

It is also from a sociological point of view that the thematic connections of the story of the rich ruler occur, for Luke presents a series of status contrasts and reversals as consequences of the different attitudes and responses to the kingdom. It is those who belong to the socially respected high classes that continue misunderstanding Jesus and fail in their response to his ministry while those on the margins of social acceptability become those who acknowledge and positively respond to it. Thus the Pharisees who raise the question about the kingdom (17:20) (mis)understand its reality as future only and look for it through some kind of special sign – something which Jesus has already opposed (cf. 11:16, 29-32.). However, the disciples, even though they do not seem to understand Jesus any better, are vindicated (18:30). The judge of the parable which follows, a person of acknowledged status in the community, is portrayed as without fear of God or respect for people (18:2), while the poor widow exemplifies those who will find justice and mercy from God because of their faith (18:8). It is again a Pharisee whom Jesus refers to, this time in a parable (18:9-14), as selfishly concerned with his own honour and status, thus unable to be found just before God (18:11-12). However, the humble toll collector whom the Pharisee scorns because of his religious stance is the one

justified before God (18:14). The children rejected by the disciples (18:15) become paradigms of those who will enter the kingdom of God, in spite of their subordinate role in the household.[3] Therefore, the main contrasting attitudes are represented, on the one hand, by those with high status or who trust in their own righteousness and, on the other hand, by those who are of humble attitude and low status.[4]

Concerning the analysis of the Lukan pericope here, four main divisions will be considered on the basis of the different issues brought to Jesus and his answers to them. They are: (1) A ruler who comes to Jesus with a question on how to inherit the kingdom, to which Jesus replies with an ultimate condition (18:18-22), (2) The reaction of the ruler which provokes a general statement on wealth and the kingdom by Jesus (18:23-25), (3) The listeners who voice their response to the situation to which Jesus replies (18:26-27), (4) Finally, Peter who makes a claim defending his position which prompts the final and general pronouncement of Jesus (18:28-30). In addition to this analysis of these four parts, attention will be paid to those elements present in the Lukan conversion accounts that are missing in the present story. Once again, from the contrast between successful conversion accounts in the third gospel and the (non-) conversion story of the rich ruler, the aim of the present study is to discover

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[3] Guijarro, Fidelidades (1998) 138-47; Rawson, Marriage, Divorce and Children (1991); Garnsey and Saller, Roman Empire (1987) 136-41; Rawson, Family in Ancient Rome (1986).

[4] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 653.

what Luke is saying about conversion within the theological framework of his gospel.

9.2 THE ENCOUNTER (18:18-22)

The story lacks any distinct element that may signal a different scene from that of the previous account, except for the new character coming to the front, "a certain ruler",[5] who asks Jesus the question that provides the plot of the account.[6] With regard to the term ἄρχων, it is used by Luke to refer either to religious leaders (cf. 8:41, 49; 13:14; Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17) or to a magistrate (cf. 12:58). Green's conjecture is that on the basis of verses 20-21 the ruler is a religious leader.[7] Whatever the case may be, what Luke's readers could infer from this term is that the person belongs to a socially elite group, those doomed to lose their privileged positions as the result of God's mighty action in favour of the dispossessed (cf. 1:52-53; 14:24; 19:10). With the exception of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue (cf. 8:41, 49), and a neutral reference to a magistrate (cf. 12:58), Luke portrays rulers in a negative way (cf. 13:14; 14:1; 18:18; 23:13, 35; 24:20).[8] To these loosely defined groups of ruling people with high social

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[5] The use of τις with a noun is typical of Luke's style. He uses the construction 38 times in the gospel (cf. Hawkins, Horae Synopticae 16-23, cited by Fitzmyer, Luke AB [1981] 111).

[6] Marshall argues that Luke does not refer to any geographical location, as it is the case in Mark, in order to enhance the link with the previous section (Luke NIGTC [1978] 684). In the Matthean parallel there is no mention of any geographical reference either. Luke does not mention the Markan remark about the man running to Jesus and kneeling before him (10:17), or the one in Matthew about the man being young (νεανίσκος, 19:20, 22).

[7] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 654. Creed argues that the man is identified as a ruler on the basis of his wealth (St. Luke [1930] 225).

[8] Cf. Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 654.

status also belong those Pharisees and scribes that have opposed Jesus and his ministry and those religious leaders that incited, mocked and consented to Jesus' death (cf. 23:13, 35; 24:20). Therefore, when the man who comes with his query to Jesus is defined as a ruler, given the connotations of the term in Luke, he is connected with people of high social status characterised in Luke as those who misunderstand and oppose him.[9] In this category fit those Pharisees and scribes appearing in other conversion stories in the third gospel who are consistently presented as opposing the salvific ministry of God in and through Jesus (cf. 5:30; 7:39; 15:2).

The query the ruler puts to Jesus is about what he could do to inherit[10] the kingdom. He is certainly aware of the interdependence between observance of the law and the issue of inheriting the land (cf. Deut 6:16-25), and the connection between obedience to the law and everlasting life in the age to come (cf. Dan 12:2). In addition, the different conversion stories in Luke have emphasised the ethical dimension implied in the positive response to Jesus' salvific ministry, so that the question of the ruler, "what must I do" (τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; 18:18) is not out of place.[11] The crowds, toll collectors, and soldiers put that same question to John the Baptist in response to his preaching of the baptism of repentance (3:10, 12, 14). Levi

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[9] Hauck and Kasch argue in favour of the identification of the rich with Jewish opponents of Jesus ("πλοῦτος," TDNT 6.328).

[10] The expression "to inherit life" is well attested in Jewish literature: Ps 37:9, 11, 18; Dan 12:2; 1QS 4.7; CD 3.20; 4Q181 1.4; 2 Macc 7:9; 4 Macc 15:3; 1 Enoch 37.4; 40.9; 58.3; Ps. Sol. 3.12. See, Bock, Luke BECNT 3B (1994)1476; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1198-9.

[11] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 654-5.

held a great banquet for Jesus as a sign of his belonging to Jesus' eschatological group (5:29). Jesus reinterprets the actions of the woman of the city as signs of her repentance (7:44-47). The return of the younger son to his father's house allows for his restoration (15:20). Zacchaeus has given to the poor half of his possessions to the poor and paid back four times what he had cheated (19:8). Thus, Green notices that the question must be taken favourably, although the ruler errs in seeing salvation in future terms.[12]

Marshall argues that the ruler is presented sympathetically here[13] but both the implicit connection with the negatively portrayed rulers in Luke and the way Jesus reacts to his question remove any optimistic picture of the character. Furthermore, it is a characteristic feature of all previous conversion stories in Luke that it is Jesus who takes the initiative, a Lukan theological emphasis absent in the story of the ruler who is the one approaching Jesus. It should be remembered that in the story of the conversion of a woman of the city (7:36-50), although she is the one coming to Jesus, she approaches him to show her gratitude. Jesus' initiative moves the encounter to a context of forgiveness of sin and granting of salvation. Likewise, in the story of the conversion of Zacchaeus (19:1-10), it is Jesus' initiative that allows the encounter to take place since all Zacchaeus' attempts to meet Jesus have failed thus far both because of his short stature and, mainly, because of the opposition of the

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[12] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 655.

[13] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 684.

crowd. Levi was setting at the tax booth when Jesus approached him and said, "Follow me" (5:27).

This ruler asks Jesus a question with regard to the kingdom, addressing Jesus as "good teacher" (διδάσκαλε ἀγαθε, 18:18), which provokes his first reaction.[14] Jews used the attribute mainly of God although there are plenty of references about it being used about people (cf. Prov 12:2; 14:14; Eccl 9:2; Lk 6:45 [par. Mt 12:35]; T. Sim. 4:4; T. Dan 1:4; T. Ash. 4:1).

Different readings have been made of Jesus' response. One reading emerges from a face value rendering of the words of Jesus, namely, that only God can be described as good and so the focus should be kept on God himself (cf. 1 Chr 16:34; 2 Chr 5:13; Pss 106:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1).[15] Another reading taken of the term is that it is a declaration of Jesus as God.[16] Some other readings reckon an acknowledgement of Jesus' own sinfulness[17] or an attempt at flattery.[18] Among these, the first reading remains the more convincing given the following affirmation by Jesus that only God is good.

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[14] An identical question is posed to Jesus in 10:25, although without the qualifying term "good". The narrator indicates that the question was issued with the intention of testing him.

[15] Cf. Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 684; Warfield, Christology (1929) 139.

[16] Geldenhuys, Luke (1951) 458; Lagrange, Saint Marc (1929[4]) 264-5.

[17] Volkmar, Die Evangelien (1870) 489.

[18] Danker, Jesus and the New Age, (1988) 299; Arndt, St. Luke (1956) 383.

However, paying attention to what the social sciences teach about the importance of social conventions in relation to status and honour in determining human interactions, Green has shown that another plausible, and complementary, reading is possible which accords with Jesus' latest teachings.[19] After the parable of the Pharisee and toll collector (18:9-14) and the incident with the children (18:15-17) where Jesus instructs the hearers on status and honour, the ruler attempts to deal with Jesus on the basis of a high concern for status recognition. The ruler is working under the values of a given set of social conventions, boundaries and language that Jesus bluntly rejects and opposes. In this respect, the attitude of the ruler seems closer to those, mainly the Pharisees and scribes, who oppose Jesus' welcoming and granting of salvation to those on the margins of society (cf. 5:30; 7:39; 15:2). Jesus does not allow the interaction to take place on the social terms established by the ruler.

Jesus' actual answer to the question of the ruler is a direct statement of the second part of the Decalogue, namely, those commands having to do with the attitude towards one's own neighbour,[20] with no mention to those commands prescribing the loving of God.[21] The reason suggested for such a list is that the

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[19] Luke NICNT (1997) 655.

[20] According to Green even the one "you shall not steal", that deals with material possessions, is to be interpreted according to "kinship and community" relationships. Thus, this commandment could read, "do not take for yourself what Yahweh has provided for the whole people of God" (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 655-6. Cf., Gnuse, You Shall not Steal [1985]).

[21] Each of the three synoptics has a different number and order of commands in their listing. Thus, Mark has got commandments 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 5; Matthew includes 6, 7, 8, 9, 5 and Lev 19:18; Luke lists 7, 6, 8, 9, 5. The alteration in order of commands 6 and 7 is also present in Deut 5:17-18 LXX ^{B}; the

commandments mentioned are the ones that can be visibly measured, while no one would possibly claim to have fully accomplished those of the first part of the Decalogue.[22] Yet, the fact that the commandments Jesus mentions can be measured seems to be a sufficient explanation in itself.

There is no explicit requirement or indication as to what Jesus implies with such a listing, to which Marshall comments that "the question on the commandments is tantamount to a requirement to observe them".[23] However, Green argues that Jesus is not implying that the ruler has to observe the given commandments but he is to be confronted with the way the Jesus' group interprets them and how he can apply them to himself.[24] Nevertheless, both interpretations are present in the text. The first one is displayed in the reply of the ruler, while the second one is exposed in Jesus' following response to the ruler's answer, as will be shown next.

Nash papyrus; Rom 13:9; Jas 2:11, which may imply that Luke is following a catechetical pattern used by some early Christian communities. Marshall believes that "the post-placing of the fifth commandment suggests that it is an addition to an original briefer text." The only possible solution is to understand that the commandments were freely used in early catechetical teaching (cf. Gundry, Use of the Old Testament [1967] 17-9; Holtz, Untersuchungen [1968] 81-2). With regard to the Lukan form of the commandments (μή with aorist infinitive), it differs from the LXX (οὐ with future indicative, so Matthew). Neither Luke nor Matthew includes the command found in Mark "You shall not defraud".

[22] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 685.

[23] Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 685.

[24] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 654. What commandments are mentioned is not the relevant element but how they are interpreted by different communities with apologetic purposes, especially what they add to them so that particular interests of the given community can be distinguished. Cf., Klinghardt, Gesetz (1988) 124-35.

It is interesting to note that the ruler from his youth[25] fulfilled[26] all the commands mentioned,[27] something Jesus seems to assume as true, at least, *prima facie*, although not as sufficient.[28] There is still one thing missing.[29] The ruler must sell everything he has in order to give it to the poor and then follow Jesus.[30] Although the ruler receives two commands, firstly to sell everything and secondly to give it to the poor, they become one single action, "there is still one thing lacking" (ἔτι ἕν σοι λείπει, 18:22) which reveals Luke's interest not in people becoming indigent but in the right use of possessions towards the poor. It is not a question of being poor in order to follow Jesus. Green argues that this is not a request in favour of poverty as a kind of "ascetic ideal" or to "renunciation" to wealth. There are, according to him, four reasons justifying the disposition of one's wealth in favour of the poor. First, it agrees with the biblical teaching on caring for the poor (cf., Exod 23:11; Lev. 19:9-10; Deut

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[25] The use of the term νεότης here is one of only four in the New Testament (also, Mk 10:20; Acts 26:4; 1 Tim 4:12).

[26] The verb φυλάσσω is used in the active mode (also Matthew) instead of the middle (Mark); cf., 11:28.

[27] The word "teacher" is omitted from Mark (pace Matthew).

[28] Luke (*pace* Matthew) does not mention that Jesus looked at the man and loved him (cf., Mk 10:21). Wilson argues that it is due to the Lukan identification of the man as a ruler, frequently depicted as opposing Jesus (Luke and the Law [1983] 27).

[29] Instead of ὑστερέω Luke uses λείπω (only time in Luke). Wilson (Luke and the Law [1983] 29) sees no way to bring together 10:25-37 and 18:18-30 on the issue of their portrayal of the Law. In the first case, it seems to him that the observance of the Law is sufficient in itself, according to Jesus, in order to inherit eternal life, while in 18:18-30 "one thing is missing". However, the link is evident in "the kind of praxis leading to eternal life articulated in this [10:25-37] narrative unit " (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 426). In both accounts, the observance of the Law by the inquirers is presumed, but it is its interpretation that causes the conflict, especially with regard to the attitude to the "other". "Who is my neighbour" and "you still lack one thing" convey Jesus' answer in terms of breaking generally accepted social status and boundaries. To inherit eternal life, anyone is one's own neighbour, even a Samaritan. Likewise, to enter the kingdom, one must be ready to accept the poor as one's equal.

[30] Luke eliminates the order to ὕπαγε and adds the word πάντα (frequent in Luke). He uses διαδίδωμι instead of δίδωμι (cf. 11:22).

15:1-18). Second, it is in line with Jesus' ministry as disclosed in his programmatic statement at the synagogue in Nazareth (4:18-19). Third, there is a rejection of social concerns with status honour and the system of giving and receiving linked to the increase of one's honour and power in the community. The followers of Jesus should give without expecting anything in return. Fourth, it is a way of identifying with Jesus himself who owns no house (cf. 9:58).[31]

Jesus interprets obedience to the will of God in accordance with the use of possessions on behalf of the poor. That is Jesus' way of defining who will inherit the kingdom of God.[32] It is the case with other conversion stories. When different people ask John, after listening to his preaching on repentance, what should they do, his answers are articulated in terms of giving from one's possessions to those in need.[33] Levi is depicted leaving everything to follow Jesus, and at the same time hosting him as a sign of his new belonging to the kingdom (cf. 5:27-28). The women healed by Jesus are now supporting him out of their means in his proclaiming of the good news of the kingdom of God (cf. 8:1-3). Zacchaeus asserts the reality of his repentance by giving half of his goods the poor (cf. 19:8). The request is complemented by a reference to

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[31] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 656.

[32] Green finds support for this reading of the text in the linguistic connections with Acts 4:32-35 (διάδος 18:22 and Acts 4:35; τὰ ἴδια 18:28, Acts 4:32) (Luke NICNT [1997] 656 & n.144).

[33] Those with two tunics or food should give to the ones without any; toll collectors and soldiers should not extort people (3:10-14).

having treasures in heaven (cf. 12:33-34)[34] and the imperative of discipleship. The ruler is expected to behave likewise in order to inherit eternal life.

9.3 THE FAILURE (18:23-25)

In his request to the ruler, Jesus outlines the defining values of the "Kingdom" community of his followers, in contrast to those generally accepted by the larger society. According to Jesus, the Kingdom of God includes those despised by society and it is in the context of this new understanding of social relationships that the demand imposed on the ruler is intelligible. At stake in Jesus' request are the issues of allegiances and social status. This certainly would affect the ruler who is now identified as very rich.[35] Therefore, the ruler is requested to choose between serving God and serving mammon (cf. 16:13), with the social consequences attached to whatever he decides.[36]

Social sciences show how wealth relates to status, power and social privilege. Stambaugh and Balch define the framework of Mediterranean society in terms

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[34] Fitzmyer argues that the "treasure in heaven" is not to be taken as referring to "eternal life", for the latter is attained through observance of the Law. The "treasure in heaven" is the reward for selling everything and giving it to the poor (Luke AB [1985] 1200). This however contradicts the following words of Jesus promising eternal life in the age to come for those who have given everything up to follow him. Furthermore, the issue of the law in this text is not so much about its observance but on how different groups interpret it.

[35] Luke reworks the end of the verse to include the word πλούσιος, a favourite of his (cf. 6:24; 12:16; 14:12; 16:1, 19, 21, 22; 18:23; 19:2). σφόδρα only appears here in Luke.

[36] Moxnes argues that the ruler chooses his wealth in order to distance himself from the poor (Economy of the Kingdom [1988] 119).

of interpersonal connections, namely, "of favors done, returns expected, allegiance owed".[37] Moxnes defines patron-client relations as

> social relationships between individuals based on a strong element of inequality and difference in power. The basic structure of the relationship is an exchange of different and very unequal resources. A patron has social, economic and political resources that are needed by a client. In return, a client can give expressions of loyalty and honor that are useful to the patron.[38]

The demand Jesus has put to the ruler implies that he would relate to the poor in an unequal way, sharing without expecting anything in return, which could be identified with "almsgiving". Moxnes has defined almsgiving as "an expression of social relations"[39] and in Luke it receives structural relevance for it represents the new reality of the Kingdom. Thus, at the house of a leading Pharisee, after noticing how other guests tried to sit close to places of honour Jesus tells the parable of the wedding (14:8-11). With it Jesus exhorts them to invite those who cannot pay them back (14:12-14) since by inviting those who can reciprocate, only peers are invited and the poor are excluded.[40] According to Moxnes' view, since Palestinian society was highly stratified and solidarity happened only between those who were social equals, something true also of Luke's Greco-Roman society,[41] a demand to give one's wealth to the poor was certainly a challenge to and a reversal of established values.[42] Thus if the ruler

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[37] Stambaugh and Bach, Social Environment (1986) 63.

[38] Moxnes, "Patron-Client Relations," (1991) 242. Also, Garnsey and Saller, Roman Empire (1987) 148-59.

[39] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 115.

[40] Green, Luke (1997) 552-3.

[41] Kim argues that almsgiving is a concept foreign also to Greco-Roman society contemporary with Luke (Stewardship and Almsgiving [1998], esp., 253-83). Also, Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 119-23; Hamel, Poverty and Charity (1990) 212-21.

[42] Moxnes, Economy of the Kingdom (1988) 119.

decided to accept Jesus' request it would imply a loss of social status, on the basis of his breaking with the patronage system and the unacceptable crossing of social boundaries between those with wealth (patron) and the poor (clients), that would threaten the whole system.[43]

The response of the ruler is one of great sadness because of his wealth. Although Luke omits Mark's remark that the ruler was shocked (στυγνάσας, 10:22) he keeps the reference to his sadness (λυπούμενος, Mark 10:22) which is enhanced by saying he was very sad (περίλυπος, Luke 18:23). This emphatic Lukan description of the ruler's reaction contrasts with Luke's theological emphasis on joy, especially related to salvation.[44] Thus, the birth of John, who is to bring back people to the Lord, will bring joy to many (cf. 1:14), and the announcement of the birth of Jesus is good news of great joy (cf. 2:10). In the story of the conversion of Levi his new allegiance to the kingdom is marked by a joyful celebration at his home (cf. 5:29). In the three parables of the lost and found in chapter 15, the reaction to the finding of the lost, which is paradigmatic of salvation, is a joyful celebration (cf. 15:7, 10, 32). Zacchaeus gladly receives Jesus at his home to signal his acceptance by him (cf. 19:6). Therefore, if joy becomes a direct response to God's salvation in Luke's

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[43] Green, Theology (1995) 113-7.

[44] See, Morrice, Joy (1984).

theology, it can be deduced that the sad reaction of the ruler indicates his rejection of God's salvation through Jesus.

Jesus acknowledges the difficulty of those who have wealth[45] in accepting his message.[46] It is interesting to notice that according to Luke's version of the story Jesus speaks while looking at the ruler who is still there. It contrasts with Mark's version where Jesus looks around and talks to his disciples (10:23), the same addressees as in Matthew (19:23). Luke[47] also omits Mark 10:24 in which Jesus addresses the disciples for a second time and repeats the sentence about how difficult it is for the wealthy to enter[48] the kingdom. In the Lukan version the ruler does not go away. The main explanation for his continuing presence is Luke's pastoral interest, namely, the attempt to influence those wealthy members of the Christian community[49] who still behave under the values Jesus disapproves in the ruler.

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[45] This is the only time that χρήμα is used in the synoptics in the three accounts of the encounter between Jesus and a ruler, and here it makes the saying of Jesus to address not only the very rich but also any wealthy person, in general (Green, Luke NICNT [1997] 657).

[46] All three synoptics use the expression δισκόλως (Mk 10:23; Mt 19:23) which are the only occurrences of the term in the New Testament.

[47] *Pace* Matthew.

[48] Luke uses the present tense εἰσπορεύονται instead of the Markan (*pace* Matthew) future tense εἰσπορεύονται. Klostermann argues that the change is due to Luke's understanding of the kingdom as already present (Das Lukasevangelium [1929] 181); while Conzelmann argues that Luke presents it as timeless (Theology of St Luke [1960] 105 n.3). However, on the basis of Luke's other use of the term in a futuristic sense (22:10) may indicate no particular theological emphasis here (cf. Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 687).

[49] Other instances in which Luke deals with the issue of the disciples' attitude to wealth: 6:24; 8:14; 11:41; 12:13-34; 16.

Jesus illustrates the difficulty of the rich entering the Kingdom with the hyperbolic saying of the camel and the eye of the needle (18:25).[50] The illustration is powerful enough to convey the emphasis of Jesus, namely, that it is impossible for a rich person, on account of wealth, to enter the kingdom. In other words, Jesus is saying that salvation is not on the basis of wealth and status claims. There have been attempts to play down the demand of the saying to make it more palatable to "wealthy tastes".[51] Nevertheless, it is clear in Luke that wealth closes the door to the kingdom. "The rich stand condemned by their wealth, and the only means they have of avoiding judgement is by helping the poor (Lk 14.12-14; 18.22)".[52] This is a reminder that what Jesus is asking for is not poverty nor a mere renunciation of wealth but the right use of possessions in favour of the needy.

9.4 "WHO CAN BE SAVED?" (18:26-27)

The ruler had not understood the message of Jesus. Both in the parable of the Pharisee and the toll collector (18:9-14) and in the saying about the kingdom and the children (18:15-17) Jesus had ruled out any status claim on the

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[50] Michel refers here to "the impossibility of something by way of violent contrast: 'Entry in to the kingdom of God is impossible for the rich'" ("κάμηλος," TDNT 3.593).

[51] Some read (κάμιλον) instead of camel (κάμηλος) (Origin and Cyril) while others have tried to identify the eye of needle with a small gate in the city wall through which the camel would pass. For further reading, Bailey, Through Peasant Eyes (1980) 165-6; Fitzmyer, Luke AB (1985) 1204; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 687; Michel, "κάμηλος," TDNT 3.593; Plummer, Luke ICC (1896) 425. There is a parallel saying in rabbinic literature about the impossibility for an elephant going through the eye of a needle (Ber. 55b; BM 38b), although it is a later one and possibly influenced by the saying of Jesus. The word "eye of a needle" τρῆμα is a *hapax legomenon.*

[52] Esler, Community and Gospel (1987) 196.

kingdom but had rather emphasised a humble and child-like attitude as the way to the kingdom. The time is now for those Luke says have been listening to show the same kind of misunderstanding manifested in their question, "who then can be saved?" (Καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι; 18:26). They are surprised that the rich are not accepted into Jesus' group, for they hold the belief that wealth and honour are a sign of a divine blessing.[53]

The allusions both to entering the kingdom (18:24) and to being saved (18:26) are equated here (cf. 13:23-30), but the understandings of those referring to them, Jesus and the listeners respectively, are quite different. Thus, Jesus' expression is based on the assumption of the rejection of conventional status barriers, on humbling oneself, on becoming like a child. That is, the way to the kingdom runs counter to widely accepted social values, because it reverses them. Thus, when the people ask Jesus about being saved, they are not doing it under the premises of the kingdom but under the worldview in which status and wealth as signifiers of people's socio-religious position are still operative. They fail to understand salvation as status reversal.[54] Such a reversal is well attested both ways, for it is not only that those with wealth and high status in society risk losing it for the sake of the kingdom, it is also that those who are on the margins of society see their situation reversed. For example, Zacchaeus is

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[53] Pleins argues that in part of the tradition of the Hebrew Scripture, wealth is the result of diligent labour and righteousness, and poverty the result of laziness and evil (cf. Deut 28; Prov 6:11; 10:4; 14:23; 21:5; 24:34). He mentions, for instance, the book of Job where the struggle against the predominant view is present (Pleins, "Poor, Poverty," ABD 5.402-14).

[54] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 658.

socially despised presumably not only because of his profession but also because of a dishonest handling of his business. When Zacchaeus meets Jesus, not only his wrong dealings are left behind but also he becomes a patron to the poor and, according to Jesus' group, an accepted member of the community. The woman of the city is strongly characterised as a sinner, not only by Jesus' critics but also by the narrator and implicitly by Jesus himself (7:37, 39, 48). However, she sees her position reversed to one worthy of praise – while the hosting Pharisee is finally depicted as a bad host unable to perform basic hospitality (7:44-47). The prodigal son, who acknowledges his sin and unworthy standing before his father (15:18-19, 21), is fully restored to his position as son and member of the household (18:22-24, 32). They are all social outsiders who find themselves now as part of the eschatological community of Jesus. Luke presents salvation as status reversal and as membership of the coming kingdom, already present through Jesus and his eschatological community, which visibly reverses the social and religious conceptions of the time.[55]

The matter of how, then, one can be saved, is really a loaded question put to Jesus, who acknowledges that one of the bases of their understanding is an impossibility that only God can make feasible.[56] The fact that Jesus says that it

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[55] Green, Theology (1995) 94.

[56] Both Mark and Mathew introduce Jesus' dictum in a more forceful way than Luke. Thus, both (Mark 10:27; Matthew 19:26) introduce the emphasis that for God "all things" (πάντα) are possible, and Mark even repeats twice the saying that, "for mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible".

is something impossible for people is a way of acknowledging the radical nature and difference of the claims of the kingdom when compared to those in vogue in the wider society. "The statement is not explained, but the point is that God can work the miracle of conversion in the hearts even of the rich".[57] The language itself shows the understanding of salvation as reversal: for ἀδύνατα become δύνατα.[58] The contrast is obvious; the way to enter the kingdom is through humility. The power of God makes the humanly impossible possible, namely, salvation.

9.5 THE PRONOUNCEMENT (18:28-30)

So far the disciples have been the silent witnesses of the words of Jesus, after they had been rebuked for impeding children from coming to him (18:15-17). It is through their usual spokesperson (cf. 8:45; 9:20, 33; 12:41) that their reaction is conveyed (18:28). They have left what they have to follow Jesus,[59] just as Levi left his business behind (5:28) or Zacchaeus gave half of his wealth to the poor and with the rest paid back to those he may have deceived (19:8), in contrast to the attitude of the ruler who is not ready to do likewise.

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[57] Marshall, Luke (1978) 686.

[58] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 1487.

[59] Luke does not use the redundant term ἄρχομαι (*contra* Mark and Matthew). He says that the disciples have left "their own" (τὰ ἴδια), in contrast to Mark and Matthew where they are said to have left everything (πάντα) to follow Jesus.

The occasion is also an opportunity for the vindication of the disciples. They have been portrayed in a negative way in the previous story, as acting according to conventional social values on status, contrary to those of the kingdom; but in this present account they are the ones who have left everything to follow Jesus. Even if anyone had understood the request to the ruler in a purely rhetorical way, the disciples exemplified the practical reality of the demand.[60] They are the model to follow.

The final statement of Jesus in the story comes as a response to the words of Peter but they are more than just a reply to him. Jesus' words display the ethical demand upon those who are to enter the kingdom and the vindication of such behaviour. Jesus' answer is not a direct confirmation of the words of the disciples but a definition of conversion and discipleship and what qualifies one for eternal life.[61] His words should not be taken in the sense of reward, for the emphasis is in giving without expecting anything in return, but that the attitude of the disciples and of those acting like them will be vindicated.[62] In his address to those listening, Jesus gives an emphatic confirmation of his promise of vindication (ἀμήν), and guarantees that they will get in this age much more than what they have left behind and in the age to come, eternal life.

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[60] See the contrast between the one missing thing for the ruler (18:22) and the declaration of Peter about having already left all they had (18:28).

[61] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 658.

[62] Bock, Luke BECNT (1994) 1488; Marshall, Luke NIGTC (1978) 688.

But what have they left? First of all, Luke mentions first the house and then people of one's own kin, like brothers,[63] parents,[64] or children, a list different to that in Mark. Luke includes the wife as a person to be left behind, which is not, according to Marshall, so much a question of breaking the already existing marriage as the renunciation of the possibility of marriage.[65] Important is the omission of Mark's reference to leaving one's own fields (ἀγρούς) which implies that in 18:29 "house" (οἰκία) should be taken as a general term referring to the household or family not to the building itself.[66] Thus, the message implied in Luke's editing of what is to be left for the sake of the kingdom[67] at conversion, affects not only one's possessions but also one's own kin (cf. 12:52-53; 14:26). It is not, again, a matter of seeking for poverty or an ascetic way of life,[68] but the emphasis on a way of life according to the

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[63] ἀδελφοί is used inclusively for both brothers and sisters (AG xxiv, 15).

[64] γονεῖς includes both father and mother.

[65] Luke NIGTC (1978) 688. Against the traditional understanding of Luke's gospel as "most favourable to women" (Ryan, "Women," [1985] 56) some women scholars (i.e. Schuessler-Fiorenza, In Memory of Her [1983] 145-6; cf. Tetlow, Woman and Ministry [1980]) have argued that texts like 18:29 or 14:26 are Luke's attempt to limit or restrict women's entrance into Jesus' group. However, the focus can well be a different one. Looking into the context, one of the excuses given to the host in the parable of the great banquet (14:15-24) for not accepting the invitation is having just married (14:20). In Deuteronomy 20:7 and 24:5 a person just married is excused from going to war or of fulfilling any other duty laid on him. In light of this, Luke's words about leaving even the wife behind should not be regarded as a male-female question but as a radicalisation of Jesus' demands on potential followers. However, Seim argues that it is an "ascetic break with the past" (Double Message [1994] 224). For instance she interprets the divorce logion in Luke not as intending the protection of marriage but emphasising the prohibition to remarry (cf. 16:18; Seim, Double Message [1994] 224).

[66] Michel "οἰκία," TDNT 5.131.

[67] Mark says, "for the sake of me and for the sake of the gospel", but Luke's variant of the text links it with 18:25 and provides with a stronger sense of unity in the account.

[68] Seim has qualified her emphasis on Luke's ascetic tendency which mainly affected marriage and family life and not food and drink matters (cf. 5:33-34; 7:33-34). Jesus becomes the example of the ideal disciple for he does not have a permanent home or family, with no wife and children (9:57-58). The demand of the Kingdom on people is so absolute that it even constitutes a detachment from family ties and obligations. According to Seim, Luke gives clear teaching on an ascetic life in which sexual relationships are abandoned (Double Message [1994] 227). These already existing family ties are re-defined according to the new reality of the Kingdom (cf. 8:19-21).

priorities of God's plan and standards disclosed by Jesus, to which possessions and family ties become subordinated claims (cf. 8:19-21; 9:57-62; 12:51-53; 14:25-26). This has been the attitude recorded in all of the conversion stories: they have all subordinated everything to conform to the demands of the kingdom, which ensues in Jesus' granting of salvation or eternal life.[69] It has consistently been the case in Luke with possessions which have not been completely disposed of and therefore, by implication, it could also be the case with family ties and relationships.

Those who have had to break existing family ties for the sake of the kingdom get Jesus' strong assurance[70] that they will receive many times more[71] than what they have left.[72] The breaking blood relationships does not mean being without a family. On the contrary, the new reality of the kingdom generates a larger family which includes all those "who hear the word of God and do it" (8:21). This new family incorporates people from different social backgrounds including those socially despised. It is to these that eternal life is promised. At this point there is a return to the question posed by the ruler.[73]

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[69] "Your faith has saved you" (7:50); "today salvation has come to this house" (19:9); "today you will be with me in paradise" (23:43).

[70] Such a stress by Luke is the result of changing ὃς οὐ μή for the Markan ἐὰν μή.

[71] Luke uses πολλαπλασίων (this Lukan use, together with the parallel one in Matthew 19:29, are the only two uses of the term in the New Testament) instead of the Markan ἑκατονταπλασίων. There is a variant reading "seven times as much", attested by D it sy$^{h\ mg}$, which would accord with Luke's frequent use of the LXX (here see, Sir. 35:11), and that Marshall regards as an unlikely scribal editing (Luke NIGTC [1978] 689; cf. Creed, St. Luke [1930] 227).

[72] Luke does not repeat the lists of blessings to be received probably to avoid redundancy (cf. Mk 10:30).

[73] Luke makes no mention of persecutions as qualifying to Jesus' promise, both because the emphasis that renunciation and self-denial convey those blessings and not persecution, and also because it is

9.6 MISSING FEATURES

In this section, attention will be given to these elements that are part of the conversion stories in Luke missing in the account of the ruler. The main purpose here is to try to understand why they are absent and what light this can shed on the main thrust of the chapter. The following analysis will draw on those common features to all conversion story already been dealt with above.[74]

The first element to consider is repentance. John the Baptist preached his baptism of repentance (3:3) and dismissed any claim to ethnic and religious status as a way to avoid God's wrath, but demanded that they "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (3:8). In his final pronouncement justifying his acceptance of Levi, Jesus argues that the goal of his mission is to call sinners to repentance (5:32). Jesus reinterprets the hospitable actions of the woman of the city towards him as manifesting her repentance (7:36-50). The parables on finding the lost emphasise the joy over the sinner who repents (15:7, 10). Zacchaeus wants to make clear to Jesus that the accusations against him are groundless and tells him about his changed attitude towards wealth which he

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Mark who stresses suffering in his theology (Bock, Luke BECNT [1994] 1491). Luke also omits Mark 10:31, to conclude with the accent on the disciples as those "for whom God made salvation possible" (Marshall, Luke NIGTC [1978] 689).

[74] There is of course an alternative view which strengthens the comparison with the story of Zacchaeus with which the account of the ruler bears many parallels (cf. Hamm, "Sight to the Blind," [1986] 464). Thus, (1) the ruler is an ἄρχων (18:18) while Zacchaeus is an ἀρχιτελώνης, (19:2); (2) they are both wealthy (18:23; 19:2); (3) the ruler is a self-confessed observer of the commandments (18:21) while Zacchaeus is despised by the crowd which considers him a sinner (19:7); (4) the rich ruler refuses to share his possessions with the poor (18:22-23) while Zacchaeus is depicted as giving half of his possessions to the poor (19:8); (5) the ruler becomes very sad (18:23) but Zacchaeus receives Jesus joyfully (19:6); (6) the ruler does not attain salvation ("who then can be saved?" 18:26) but Zacchaeus receives salvation "today" (19:9-10).

now shares with the needy as a sign of his repentance (19:8). In contrast, the ruler does not show any sign of repentance. On the contrary, even though he becomes sad, he is not ready to acknowledge that his attitude towards wealth, and therefore to God, is wrong.

The ruler's lack of repentance is tantamount to his lack of acknowledgement of sin. Luke portrays him as in line with those professing self-righteousness, as for example the Pharisee with a self-righteous attitude described in the parable of 18:9-14. Far from those labelled "sinners", either by self-recognition as in the cases of the lost son (15:18, 21) and the penitent thief (23:41) or accusation as in the cases of Levi (5:30), the woman from the city (7:37, 39) and Zacchaeus (19:7), the rich ruler approaches Jesus trying to interact with him within the framework of social honour and status recognition. According to Luke's twofold presentation of people's response to the ministry of Jesus, the ruler is depicted as closer to those opposing Jesus for his welcoming sinners in as much as he is not able to grasp the divine purpose behind Jesus' ministry to them.

Luke's theological emphasis on repentance has become a necessary element in those conversion stories with a positive outcome. Consequently, forgiveness is not granted to the ruler for he has failed to acknowledge his sin and his need. He fits in well with the category of those whom Jesus describes as those who are well and do not need a physician (5:31). The contrast is provided in stories

like the conversion of the anonymous woman of the city, where Jesus explicitly forgives her (7:48), or those of Levi (5:27-32), the lost son (15:11-32), Zacchaeus (19:1-10) and the penitent thief (23:39-43), where forgiveness is manifested in Jesus' welcoming and fellowship with them, to the offence of his self-righteous critics.

Secondly, it is evident that table fellowship, a prominent topic in Luke, is absent in the story of the encounter of Jesus and the ruler. As a foretaste of the eschatological banquet and as a sign of the new eschatological fellowship in Jesus, Levi holds a great banquet for Jesus (5:29), a woman treats Jesus the way a host should have done (7:37-38, 44-46), the father of the lost son marks the restoration of his son with a big celebration (15:22-24, 32), and Zacchaeus welcomes Jesus into his home (19:6). Jesus welcomes sinners in his fellowship, grants them forgiveness and celebrates the reality of the new community around the table.

9.7 CONCLUSION

Although this is a negative story from the perspective of the response of the ruler, it nonetheless serves the purpose of defining the meaning of conversion, by way of contrast with

> the particularity of the community oriented toward Jesus, a community of those who embody the values of the kingdom of God. They are those who distance themselves from the status conventions of this world, who find their devotion in God and not in 'what they have,' who undertake a radical

> disposition of their possessions on behalf of the poor, and who follow Jesus in discipleship (vv. 22, 28-29).[75]

The present chapter has aimed at emphasising conversion in Luke's theology by way of contrast between those general characteristics present in all positive conversion stories in the Third Gospel and those of the encounter between Jesus and the ruler. The main points are as follows. (1) Conversion requires God's initiative through Jesus. No claim to status and power can help it. On the contrary, they become an obstacle that only God can overcome. (2) There is an emphasis on the ethical dimension of the kingdom, so that obedience to God's commandments is interpreted according to one's attitude to wealth and the poor. (3) This implies that the community of Jesus' disciples is an inclusive community, incorporating people regardless of generally accepted social boundaries. (4) Joy is sign of God's salvation, and in turn, sadness marks its absence. (5) Salvation finds expression in status reversal, so that those on the margins of socio-religious acceptability at the time are welcomed into Jesus' fellowship. (6) Both wealth and family are reinterpreted in relation to the kingdom. (7) There is divine vindication for those who have left what they have to follow Jesus. This action translates into a new and larger family in the present age and in the one to come brings eternal life. (8) Acknowledgement of sin, repentance, forgiveness and table-fellowship are other elements characteristic of Luke's theology with regard to conversion. Because of the

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[75] Green, Luke NICNT (1997) 654.

failure of the ruler to respond appropriately, they are absent in the account, conversion does not take place, salvation is not granted.

CONCLUSION

1 BACKGROUND

The first two chapters of the present work looked at the phenomenon of conversion both in Judaism and in the philosophical life. Concerning conversion to Judaism, attention was paid to the social requirements and consequences of conversion for the prospective convert seen in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, Flavius Josephus, the Qumran's documents and *Joseph and Aseneth*. The latter is certainly the only complete work dealing with conversion, in which Aseneth becomes the paradigm of the ideal convert to Judaism. A general characteristic of the works of Josephus, Philo and *Joseph and Aseneth* is that they are apologetic in nature, trying to convey the superiority of Judaism, while the Dead Sea Community documents are those of a community defining itself against the predominant view of Judaism at the time.

The difficulties in finding references to actual conversion experiences in most of the texts dealt with meant that attention was focused on references to rites of entry into some of the particular religious groups referred to in the texts or on the description of some of the religious groups portrayed in the texts in order to to construe from the depiction of their *modus vivendi* what the social implications for

a convert to that group would be. The guiding criteria for analyzing and organizing the data has been to look, firstly, at the general social requirements and consequences of conversion; then secondly to narrow down the examination to the family and community consequences and, thirdly, to look at how conversion affected possessions.

Concerning family and social ties in Judaism, the new community became the new family for the convert. Marriage was generally negatively portrayed as a threat to the pursuit of virtue, although in Josephus' description of the Essenes, marriage is accepted for the sake of procreation, while according to Philo's account the Therapeutae practised complete chastity. Another general characteristic of the groups studied is that as a consequence of their lack of ability to alter society around them and thus to live their values within it, they withdrew from larger society to create their own separate community. With reference to possessions, with the exception of the Therapeutae who left possessions behind, all groups used their possessions for the support and welfare of the new community. An interesting element from *Joseph and Aseneth* is that as a result of her conversion, Aseneth is portrayed not only destroying the gold and silver idols, but giving the gold and silver pieces to the poor. Such a reference is remarkable in the set of literature that has been analysed and is analogous to the attitude of the convert described by Luke.

Conversion to philosophy was the theme of the second chapter of the thesis. Four groups were studied, namely, Epicureans, Platonists, Stoics and Cynics, although the last of these received more detailed examination. There is a general lack of evidence on what the sociological demands on the prospective convert were. Therefore, attention was directed to the interaction between the philosophical groups and society and to how their activities might have affected or have been intended to affect the social reality of the sympathisers.

One basic feature of most philosophical movements of the time was the lack of interest in making converts. This is a major difference from the approach of the various religious groups examined above. Philosophical schools showed different levels of interest in spreading their teachings. In fact, the use of the term "conversion" to convey the consequences of the philosophical enterprise needs to be qualified. Although cases of conversion in philosophy have been shown, in most instances all that can be conveyed is the degree of behavioural change. In fact, the goal of the philosophical groups was to improve people's lives, not to make converts. The way to attain this improvement or transformation was through imitation of the philosopher. Philosophers emphasized a healthy life through knowledge.

2 CONVERSION IN LUKE

The widely recognized interest in conversion in Luke's writings needs no demonstration. Conversion is a major theme in Luke's theological enterprise and much has been written about it. However, in the Introduction, the existing imbalance in the treatment of the topic between the Third Gospel and Acts was shown. Most efforts at dealing with conversion in Luke have only treated those accounts in Luke's second volume. Relatively little attention has been paid to conversion in the Gospel of Luke, as the analysis of recent research on the topic has shown; or when some attention has been paid, it has been insufficient. In fact, it is even the case that scholars claiming to be treating conversion in Luke-Acts use references from the gospel only as secondary supports for their main thesis on Acts.

The analysis here of the different conversion stories in the Third Gospel has been aimed at breaking this imbalance and giving conversion in the Gospel of Luke the prominence Luke himself did. Thus, it has been shown that Luke's portrayal of conversion is essential to understand his emphasis on salvation. The number of distinctive conversion texts justifies this claim, the intentional editing of sources evidences Luke's theological interest in conversion, and the interdependence of

conversion as a topic with others in the gospel raises the question why the issue has been neglected for so long.

The study of the occurrence of conversion-related terms has shown the standing of conversion in the Lukan corpus. The present study builds on the assumption of their importance and has tried to show the prominence of the theme of conversion in Luke's theology from a redactional approach.

3 A PARADIGM OF CONVERSION

A significant outcome of the analysis of conversion in Luke is that it is legitimate to speak of a *Lukan paradigm* of conversion. This is based upon the observation that there is a certain number of elements present in most conversion stories. Each individual element of the pattern is not a sufficient description of the process, so that it is in its totality and interdependence that these elements are to be considered. In what follows, the different elements of the paradigm will be structured into a systematic pattern. This is not the way Luke has depicted them in the different conversion narratives, as the present analysis of them has shown. In fact, the order of the different chapters in this work has followed intentionally the sequence of the Lukan narrative itself. However, it is for the sake of clarity that the

following arrangement is presented. Each of the elements in the pattern will be supported with illustrations from the conversion narratives.

3.1 Divine Initiative

The theme of God's salvific plan is a central motif in the Lukan narrative and, as part of that purpose, divine initiative becomes a relevant Lukan emphasis. To express such a salvific plan at work in and through Jesus, Luke uses the language of necessity (cf. 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7, 44, all unique to Luke except for 9:22), as it is the divine initiative that prompts the action. Such a predetermined plan becomes evident in Jesus' welcoming of those otherwise despised by holders of the values of the wider society and the religious community (cf. 3:3, 12; 5:27, 30; 7:37, 39; 15:1-2; 19:2, 7; 23:40-41). In this category, Luke has emphasised two main groups, namely, toll-collectors and sinners. Given the lack of recognised status and power of these people, Luke makes Jesus' acceptance of them a consequence of the gracious divine purpose and initiative at work in his ministry which goes beyond both any social or religious claim and any predetermined boundaries. Therefore, divine initiative becomes a relevant characteristic of Jesus' ministry and it is a primary feature in Luke's conversion stories.

3.2 Conflict

In Luke, the divine salvific initiative manifested in Jesus' welcoming of people otherwise rejected by those who generally accept conventional socio-religious values becomes a major element of the criticism and opposition to his ministry (cf. 5:30; 7:39; 15:2; 19:7). According to Luke, religious leaders censure and murmur against Jesus' association with these people, accusing him of befriending toll collectors and sinners (cf. 5:30; 7:34; 15:1-2).

Luke pays careful attention to the way he portrays both sides of the conflict. On the one hand, those positively responding to the ministry of Jesus are either sinners (7:36-50; 15:1-32; 23:39-43); toll collectors (3:12; 5:27-32; 19:1-10) or criminals (23:39-43). On the other hand, there are those who are pictured as representing conventional socio-religious values. Under this category Luke mainly refers to religious leaders, particularly Pharisees (5:30; 7:39; 15:2). Even when it is the crowds who oppose Jesus at the end of his ministry, they are presented as conveying similar attitudes to those of the religious leaders ("grumbling", 19:7; cf. 5:30; 15:2).

Thus, in line with the polarised responses to God's salvific plan, those converting are considered outside the margins of acceptability according to both social and

religious conventions, while those setting and living within those margins do not convert but oppose the divine salvific plan.

3.3 Sin/Sinners

A present contention in this work is that those within socio-religious boundaries use the term "sinner" as a label to define those outside them. It is a special Lukan characteristic to use "sinner" mainly as an accusation in the lips of those opposing Jesus (5:30; 7:39; 15:2; 19:7). This, however, should not lead to immediately dismissing the accusation as false. Describing the use of sin/sinner as *only* factional in the Lukan conversion accounts is misleading. It is not the intention to deny that people are sinners. In fact, what Luke is rejecting is the narrow and sectarian use of the term whereby those using it of others see themselves as blameless. Accordingly, Luke is emphasising the universality of sin. There is no one without sin. All need repentance (13:3, 5).

Sinners are the goal of Jesus' ministry. This is what Jesus tells his critics, that he has come to call them to repentance (5:32). Divine initiative works in favour of those on the fringes of social and religious acceptability who, in turn, are depicted as those ready to acknowledge their sin and receptive towards the ministry of God's envoy. In the context of the conflicting sides presented in the conversion stories, the "sinners" are the ones who acknowledge God's purpose while

Pharisees and scribes are those who have rejected God's plan for themselves (7:29-30).

3.4 Repentance

Repentance becomes in Luke's conversion accounts both the expected consequence of the divine initiative and also the sole condition for forgiveness. Furthermore, repentance indicates the change from previous allegiances to commitment to God. One relevant example of Luke's emphasis on repentance is his redactional addition to Jesus' claim that he has come to call sinners: he is calling them to repentance (5:32).

In Luke, those despised as sinners are the ones depicted as repenting, while those who see themselves as righteous remain unaltered. In fact what Luke is doing is presenting the two approaches at stake in his characterisation. While the ministry of Jesus emphasises the universal need of repentance regardless of any claim, those who oppose him and his ministry do so from a limited and factional point of view that characterises them as (self-)righteous. The emphasis is unambiguous: since all are sinners, all need to repent.

3.5 Wealth/Possessions

An important element in the Lukan conversion paradigm is that repentance is manifested in good deeds, which are related to the proper use of possessions, especially in regard to the poor. It is the attitude towards wealth that signals whether repentance is present or not (cf. 3:11, 13-14; 5:28; 8:1-3; 15:12-14, 29-30; 19:2, 8). It is a matter of allegiances which, as the result of conversion, change from loyalty to mammon to loyalty to God. Behind the Lukan stress on repentance manifested in the attitude towards possessions lies the struggle between opposing and mutually excluding allegiances not a plea for poverty. At stake is who becomes the master of people's lives, either mammon or God.

3.6 Forgiveness

There are few instances in the Lukan conversion stories in which forgiveness is directly and explicitly offered to the individual concerned. With the exception of the account of the woman of the city, who receives from Jesus the forgiveness of her sins (7:48) and the promise to the criminal on the cross that he would be with Jesus in paradise which certainly amounts to his forgiveness (23:43), it is mainly as a description of the ministry of Jesus that forgiveness is dealt with. Luke makes it evident through the attitudes and actions of Jesus towards people that forgiveness has happened (cf. 5:29; 7:47-49; 15:20, 22-24; 19:5, 7; 23:43). Therefore, it can be

contended that is in the resulting acceptance of and fellowship with those people aimed at in Jesus' ministry that forgiveness is to be recognised.

3.7 Table-Fellowship and Joy

In line with Luke's descriptive approach to conversion, forgiveness is not simply granted but also visible through "deeds". It is through joy and table-fellowship that the reality of forgiveness is manifested. It is a special Lukan emphasis to signal the forgiveness and salvation granted by ensuing joy (cf. 5:29; 15:6-7, 9-10, 32; 19:6). Together with joy, Luke reflects the reaction to forgiveness and salvation through celebrations especially at the table (cf. 5:29-30; 7:36; 8:3; 15:23; 19:5, 7). In sum, it is at the table that both the joy of salvation is celebrated and Jesus' forgiveness is granted to those who repent.

3.8 Reversal

According to Luke, it is in the encounter and interaction with Jesus that the reversal in the situation of people like the toll collectors and sinners occurs. Thus, divine initiative displayed in the ministry of Jesus manifests itself in the welcoming of the socially despised. Forgiveness is confirmed in table-fellowship, evidencing the reality of the new eschatological community advanced in the group of the followers of Jesus.

Jesus challenges predominant social and religious values by accepting in his fellowship those deemed by ruling religious groups as sinners or outcasts. Jesus grants them salvation on the basis of their acceptance of his ministry through repentance, and thus they become members of the eschatological community. Jesus reformulates values held by leading socio-religious groups. Honour and community acceptance are now attained through repentance. The values of the kingdom of God and those of the wider society enter into conflict in the ministry of Jesus. In sum, the Lukan conversion stories have become not simply a challenge and reinterpretation of generally accepted socio-religious values but their reversal for those who convert.

3.9 Climactic Pronouncement

All conversion stories conclude with a pronouncement by Jesus linking the main scope of his ministry and the main theological emphasis of the story. These pronouncements are basic statements by Jesus through which he reacts and responds to the hostile words and actions of his opponents. When criticized by Pharisees and their scribes for his fellowship with toll collectors and sinners, Jesus declares that the reason for his ministry is to bring repentance and forgiveness to sinners (5:31-32; 7:48, 50) and salvation to the lost (15:7, 10, 32; 19:9-10; 23:43). Therefore, all of these pronouncements mark the main scope of the stories, namely,

the reception of salvation through the ministry of Jesus by repentant toll collectors and sinners.

3.10 Christological Emphasis

In a way, it is the completion of the circle to emphasise the christological connotations of the Lukan conversion stories. In fact, the conflict in the narratives results from the different understandings of and attitudes towards Jesus' ministry. Thus, on the one hand, those who criticise Jesus' welcoming of and fellowship with toll collectors and sinners are those who do not acknowledge his ministry. In this group, as shown above, Luke mainly includes people in ruling positions both in society and religion. On the other hand, the Lukan emphasis on Jesus as saviour becomes evident in his activity towards the socially despised. Jesus is the one bringing God's plan to fruition in his welcoming and forgiving of those deemed as "sinners". Therefore the depiction of Jesus as saviour, the one who brings salvation according to God's universal plan to those rejected by socio-religious standards is a major emphasis in Luke's conversion accounts (cf. 5:31-32; 7:39, 49; 15:1-32; 19:9-10; 23:43). This is already foretold in the infancy sections in Luke, in which Jesus is not only to bring God's salvation. He is the saviour himself (cf. 1:69; 2:11). In sum, it has been in the encounter with Jesus that forgiveness has been granted, salvation bestowed. It is in the way people favourably respond to

God's initiative towards them in Jesus that salvation is obtained. He is acknowledged as saviour.

By way of contrast to the paradigm exposed in the Lukan conversion stories, the story of the ruler coming to Jesus inquiring about the kingdom ends in failure due to the attitude of the ruler. If repentance in Luke is shown through good deeds, especially through the right attitudes towards possessions, the ruler fails to repent, for his ultimate allegiance is to wealth. Consequently, there is no forgiveness and no occasion for joy and table fellowship. There is no reversal and the pronouncement by Jesus emphasises the incompatibility of status claims and wealth allegiances and the way to the kingdom. The ruler's case becomes a negative example of what conversion aims at, namely at the reception of God's salvation through acceptance of Jesus and his ministry.

4 SUMMARY

In the present study, the establishment of a paradigm of conversion in Luke has arisen from the enterprise of a separate analysis of conversion in the Third Gospel. In that way, the tendency to read Acts into the Gospel of Luke has been avoided. Nevertheless, the interdependence of the two Lukan works opens the door for further research. Issues like the connection with the conversion stories in Acts;

whether the pattern repeats itself in Acts or whether it develops into something else; the need to study the links with other theological elements that become more explicit and relevant to conversion in Acts, such as faith, baptism, the Spirit: these are just a few examples of the new possibilities at hand resulting from the establishment of conversion in the Gospel of Luke as a prominent and thoroughly developed topic within the Lukan theological framework.

In the evangelist's masterful telling of the story of Jesus the paradigm of conversion is a fundamental component. If the present study has demonstrated that this is so, its purpose has been accomplished.

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